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Free to Deployed Areas

Afghanistan leadership shows signs of discord

By LYNNE O'DONNELL
The Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — President Ashraf Ghani has promised a complete overhaul of Afghanistan's government to root out corruption and incompetence, but after three months in office, three missed deadlines and countless promises, he and his election rival-turned-deputy have yet to appoint a single Cabinet minister.

The repeated delays have meant that Ghani is single-handedly grappling with a dizzying array of challenges — from a revitalized Taliban insurgency to a reset of long-fraught relations with neighboring Pakistan — and have fueled speculation that he and Chief Executive Abdullah

Abdullah, the equivalent of his prime minister, are still at each other's throats.

Gitmo prisoners released in show of confidence in Afghan president

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"They cannot agree on anything, you can hear the shouting from here," said Mohammad, a Kabul shopkeeper, echoing the belief of many Afghans that Ghani and Abdullah cannot work together.

A wide range of sources close to both men, including Afghan associates, officials and Western diplomats, say however that the two have amicably shared the task of selecting potential ministers.

Among the hurdles to naming the full Cabinet, according to Ghani's spokesman Nazifullah Salarzai, is ensuring that the government is wholly representative of Afghanistan's complex jigsaw of interests.

"That requires consultations with all parties, with all interest groups on all issues, including gender issues which have to be navigated carefully. All of the complexities of Afghanistan's cultural, ethnic and geographic makeup have to be taken into account," he said.

SEE DISCORD ON PAGE 6



HEATH DRUZIN/Stars and Stripes

"Uncle! Uncle! Hamburger! Hamburger!" Two young boys reach for a sack of hamburgers at a food truck in Kabul, Afghanistan.

POPPED CULTURE

By HEATH DRUZIN ■ Stars and Stripes

Western influence explodes on streets of Afghanistan

KABUL
Farhad remembers well the hairy aftermath of the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in 2001. For three weeks straight, men who had been forced to grow long beards under the strict Islamic law imposed by the Taliban lined up day and night outside his barber shop to liberate their faces.

"At the time, all we did all day was shave beards," said Farhad who, like many Afghans, goes by one name. "We had to start at six in the morning and wouldn't close until 11 at night."

Speaking in his shop, adorned with head shots of actors like Brad Pitt and Elijah Wood, Farhad said he now has to keep up with American and European celebrities, who set fast-changing hairstyle trends in Afghanistan.

"In the Taliban time, (cutting hair) was just like a farmer tending his orchard — if the tree is too big, just trim the branches and don't worry about what it looks like," he said.

It's been 13 years since the American military ousted the Islamist Taliban government, and as the U.S.-led International Security Assistance Force prepares to finish its combat mission at the end of the year, Western influence can be seen far beyond the battlefield in this once isolated nation — from American hip-hop blaring in taxis, to pizzerias and blue jeans.

SEE CULTURE ON PAGE 3

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"I go about most of my days wishing I was in another place, in another Air Force field."

—Officer in sworn testimony to investigators looking into allegations that two commanders at Minot Air Force Base, N.D., were mistreating subordinates

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COMING SOON

Shifting Gears

Ferrari positions itself as lifestyle brand ahead of IPO



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MILITARY



JAMES R. SMITH/Courtesy of the U.S. Marine Corps

Guiding her in

Marines with Combat Logistics Battalion 2, Combat Logistics Regiment 2, 2nd Marine Logistics Group, work with the Marines and sailors of the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit as they guide a Navy landing craft air cushion onto Onslow Beach at Camp Lejeune, N.C., on Tuesday. Marines loaded vehicles, personnel and ammunition aboard the LCACs to be transported to the USS Fort McHenry.

Massive defense spending bill now law

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama on Friday signed into law a massive defense policy bill that endorses his plan to fight Islamic State militants, including airstrikes and training Iraqis and moderate Syrian rebels.

The law authorizes funds for basic military operations, from a 1 percent pay raise for troops to the purchase of ships, aircraft and other war-fighting equipment.

It also authorizes the training and equipping of moderate Syrian rebels battling the extremists for two years and provides \$5 billion to train Iraqis battling the militants who brutally rule large sections of the two countries.

The measure provides the core funding of \$521.3 billion for the military and \$63.7 billion for overseas operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. Despite Obama's objections, it maintains a ban on transferring terror suspects from the Guantanamo Bay detention center in Cuba to the United States for prosecution or imprisonment.

Obama issued a separate statement criticizing the ban on Guantanamo transfers in the defense bill and the government funding bill he signed last week. Obama declared at the outset of his presidency that he wanted to close the detention center, but Congress has thwarted his efforts.

"I have consistently opposed these restrictions and will continue to work with the Congress to

remove them," Obama said. "The Guantanamo detention facility's continued operation undermines our national security. We must close it."

House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, highlighted the ban on Guantanamo transfers. He said bringing terror suspects to the U.S. "would be both dangerous and deeply unpopular" with Americans.

The Pentagon sought cuts in military benefits. Lawmakers compromised in the bill by agreeing to make servicemembers pay \$3 more for copays on prescription drugs and trimming the growth of the off-base housing allowance by 1 percent instead of the Pentagon's deeper 5 percent recommendation.

The law also prohibits retirement of the A-10 Warthog, the close-air support plane often described as ugly but invaluable.

The law changes the way the military justice system deals with sexual assault cases, including scrapping the nearly century-old practice of using a "good soldier defense" to raise doubts that a crime has been committed. The measure gives accusers a greater say in whether their cases are litigated in the military or civilian court system, and would establish a confidential process to allow victims to challenge their separation or discharge from the military.

It also makes victims of the November 2009 attack at Fort Hood, Texas, eligible to receive the Purple Heart.

DODDS SPORTS

Keep up with the champions of overseas military high school sports with Stars and Stripes. Visit Stripes.com/sports for DODEA sports news, scores, photos and more.



WAR/MILITARY

Culture: Jeans, T-shirts favored by some over traditional clothing

FROM FRONT PAGE

It's unclear if the fads will stick, but the trend is striking and with Internet access growing, Afghans are more exposed to ideas from around the globe.

Still conservative

Afghanistan remains a deeply conservative country, especially in rural areas, where much of the population lives. Many women are still covered head to toe in burgas, and many men stick to the shalwar kameez — the baggy pants and a flowing tunic common in much of Afghanistan and neighboring Pakistan. Folk music is still the most common soundtrack, even on the streets of the capital. The smell of kebab still

Levi's is the most popular with young people.

Afghan clothing store owner

dominates at lunchtime, and popular sports such as cricket and the horse-back game burzkashi aren't going anywhere. But the days of the Taliban banning music and television, forcing men to grow out their beards and coning women to their homes are long gone, at least in Kabul. In the capital, Afghans are just as likely to wear jeans and T-shirts as traditional clothing, and Western fashions have surfaced in other urban areas as well.

"Levi's is the most popular with young people," said an Afghan clothing store owner who specializes in jeans and brand-name shirts like Tommy Hilffiger and Ralph Lauren — though he sticks to the traditional shalwar kameez.

Some taxi drivers blare American and European pop music, and a few even have dashboard television screens showing music videos, many of which would make even the most liberal Taliban blush. Cars sport large "24" stickers, a nod to the American television show that features terrorist-fighting anti-hero Jack Bauer and like the war in Afghanistan is very much a product of the 9/11 attacks.

The Apple symbol has become high on both clothing and cars, and now, for better or for worse, at least two frozen yogurt shops have opened in Kabul.

Outside the headquarters of the



PHOTOS BY HEATH DRUZIN/Stars and Stripes

Top: A boy plays cricket on a Kabul street in Afghanistan.

Above: Jeans and designer T-shirts line the walls of one of the many Kabul clothing stores selling Western fashions.

international military coalition, kids hawkling scarves and trinkets greet foreigners with, "Hey, man, hook a brutha up."

Not everyone is pleased with the Western influence. The Taliban, not surprisingly, have rallied against what they see as "immoral" and "vulgar" trends permeating society. But some in

the Afghan government and pro-government religious circles, too, have condemned what they see as damaging Western influence.

Even former President Hamid Karzai, seen as fairly liberal on social issues, backed a push from religious conservatives in 2013 to prevent the broadcast of television programs that he deemed "vulgar,

obscene and un-Islamic and are counter to social morality."

Still, even in conservative Kandahar, the Taliban's heartland and Afghanistan's second city, DVD shops hawk pirated copies of the latest American action movies.

At the Afghan National Institute of Music, a primary and high school for musically inclined Afghan children, visitors may hear something most unusual in Afghanistan: the muffled strains of Led Zeppelin emanating from a classroom. Practicing at the school is the band Sama, part of Kabul's tiny but growing rock scene.

Drawing from influences as wide-ranging as Metallica and Bach, Sama is trying to bring rock to a country where folk music still dominates and many still see Western music as immoral.

"I want to show the people that Afghanistan doesn't only play folk music and to introduce rock and pop to Afghans," said the band's pianist and arranger, Milad.

Pop music has gained an audience in Kabul, which now boasts an annual rock festival. But so far, Sama has confined its concerts mostly to embassies and cultural centers, where audiences are largely made up of foreigners and the Afghan elite. Sama's members, all in their late teens and early 20s,

say playing rock in public is still a dicey proposition — a risk underscored by a recent suicide bombing at the French cultural center where the group once played and by a Taliban threat that specifically mentioned the music institute.

"If you have a concert in an open place, it could be a problem," Milad said.

One of the most popular shows on television is an Afghan version of "American Idol." Western action movies play on televisions in corner shops and government ministers' offices alike, and one ice cream stand even boasts a picture of reality television star Kim Kardashian.

The humble hot dog

At the Bush Bazaar, a thriving market stolen and knocked off Western goods named after the American president who invaded Afghanistan, shoppers can get the latest camouflage gear, military backpacks and boots, energy drinks, counterfeit outdoor gear, and even dietary supplements popular with weight-lifting foreign soldiers.

Food trucks on Kabul streets hawk the humble hot dog, a staple of American baseball games and backyard grills. Reflecting the recent food truck trend that has swept much of America, the three-wheeled mobile kitchens are in the shape of a mustard-covered hot dog and ply major roads around the capital selling their signature chicken and beef dogs — pork is forbidden by Islam — along with burgers and fries.

The trucks are run by Lazeed (Dari for "delicious"), whose co-owner, Abdullah Karim, said demand for hot dogs has been good but that it took some education in a Muslim country where dogs are considered unclean.

"The name 'hot dog' is tricky," he said.

Despite some early misunderstandings, though, Karim said Afghans have embraced his mobile fast food, and he has plans to expand from five trucks to 10 by March and to as many as 50 a year from now.

"Every type of person in Kabul is eating our food, from garbage collectors to ministers."

Zubair Babakarhaili contributed to this report.

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UN officials expect Afghan civilian casualties to top 10,000

By JOSH SMITH
Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — Civilian casualties for 2014 in Afghanistan are expected to exceed 10,000 by the end of the year, according to the United Nations, making it the deadliest year for noncombatants since the international organization began issuing authoritative reports in 2009.

"One of the measurements of the security situation has been civilian casualties," Nicholas Haysom, who heads the U.N. mission

in Afghanistan, told reporters Friday at a press conference in New York.

"Civilian casualties are a particularly tragic and very prominent part, even benchmark, of the horror of the violence that ordinary Afghans face," he said.

In the first 11 months of this year, 3,188 civilians were killed and 6,429 injured, for a total of 9,617 noncombatant casualties in Afghanistan. That's a 19 percent overall increase over the year before, U.N. officials said. Compared to 2013, this year saw a 33 per-

cent increase in casualties among children.

The leading causes continue to be ground fighting between Afghan government forces and insurgent groups, and improvised explosive devices such as roadside bombs.

This year also saw several major suicide bombings that took a heavy toll on civilians, including an attack on a volleyball match in November that left at least 53 people dead, including 21 children.

Past U.N. reports have indicated that anti-government insur-

gent groups like the Taliban are accountable for the vast majority of civilian deaths, but as fighting has increased, a growing number of civilians are being caught up in clashes between security forces and militants.

Deaths attributable to the NATO military coalition have dropped as the international forces withdraw and curtail airstrikes, which continue to claim occasional civilian lives.

3,188

The number of civilians killed in the first 11 months of 2014. U.N. officials said 6,429 civilians were injured, for a total of 9,617 noncombatant casualties in Afghanistan, up 19 percent from the year before.

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MILITARY

Future war dogs taken in as foster pups

By NATALIE STEWART
Killeen (Texas) Daily Herald

FORT HOOD, Texas — When the time comes for Sarah Clark to send her foster dog Gwendolyn back to Lackland Air Force Base near San Antonio, she'll find solace in knowing her Belgian Malinois has a job to do and a purpose to fulfill.

Officials with the Department of Defense Military Working Dog Center at the Air Force base were at Fort Hood, Texas, recently to bring seven Belgian Malinois and Dutch shepherd puppies to foster families who will socialize the dogs. Once the puppies are 7 months old, they will return to Lackland to enter into a training program.

Capt. Dawn Hull, of the Public Health Command District, Fort Hood Veterinary Services, said all military working dogs from Lackland have a double letter at the beginning of their first names.

Clark, who served as a military police officer in the Army and was in the law enforcement field for more than two decades, said she's fostered puppies with Lackland in the past.

"I wouldn't trade this for the world," she told the Killeen Daily Herald. "If I can give something back and help soldiers downrange and here in the garrison environment, then the more the better. I would do it over and over again."

Clark said while it will be hard to see Gwendolyn go, she knows the dog has a job to do.

"It's hard to give them back when it's time because you do get attached," she said. "I know, though, that they go to a better place where they are needed and they have a job to do. They take care of soldiers, so it's worth it."

Tracy Cann, breeding program foster consultant for the Department of Defense Military Working Dog Center at Lackland, said the center breeds about 100 dogs annually that go into the Defense Department system.

The puppies are fostered out to families at about 6 weeks old to be socialized.

"If they grow up in kennels, they're not environmentally solid," Cann said. "They're scared of people or aggressive toward people. When they grow up with a family, they're environmentally stimulated in a variety of areas, so they come back ready to work."

Once the dogs return to Lackland, they receive about six months of training and then enter into a formal dog training school



PHOTOS BY BRYAN CORREIA, KILLEEN (TEXAS) DAILY HERALD/DA/PT
Tracy Cann, center, holds a puppy from the Department of Defense Military Working Dog Center at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio on Friday at the Fort Hood Military Working Dog Kennel.

for another 90 to 120 days of training where they are trained to be explosive detection and patrol dogs.

"Detection is our goal; patrol is kind of the gravy on top," Cann said.

‘They take care of soldiers, so it’s worth it.’

Sarah Clark
fosters puppies

"Once the dogs are trained and ready to go to work, they go to all branch offices of service." Renee Johnson, volunteer coordinator at Fort Hood, helps find families to foster the puppies.

"They have some guidelines. They have to have a home with a yard," she said. "They don't like the families to have small children."

Johnson said people who want to foster fill out an application that is sent to the Defense Department, and then officials perform site vis-

its to determine if a family is a good fit.

Johnson, who is fostering Pfint II, said she fosters because "the end result is an amazing dog."

"I've been able to raise a puppy and see him grow into a working dog, deploy and do all of these amazing things," she said. "It's just like, 'Wow, that was my dog.'"

Johnson said she, like Clark, gets attached to the dogs, but "it's in their blood" to do the work they do with the military.

"What happens is you love the dog, and you love him so much, but at seven months you can't stimulate their minds and physical needs enough," she said. "At that point, it's like, 'I love you, but it's time for you to go to work now.'"

Once the dogs have gone on to fulfill their duties, Johnson said she still calls to check up on them and "see how my pups doing."

"It's a good feeling," she said. "It makes you proud to see your pup go on and do all these great things and do them really well."



Gwain, a Dutch shepherd, sits with Rachel Brunhoeber, a foster family member.

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MILITARY



Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Jonathan Greenert speaks with Herbert Gordon Claudius Jr. on Dec. 16. Claudius accepted the Legion of Merit award on behalf of his father for actions that resulted in the sinking of an enemy submarine.

Navy admits error, honors WWII vet

By JON HARPER
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Navy has posthumously awarded the Legion of Merit with a Combat “V” device to Herbert G. Claudius, 72 years after it dismissed his claims that he and his crew sunk a German U-boat off the coast of Louisiana during World War II.

His son, Herbert Gordon Claudius Jr., accepted the award from Navy Secretary Ray Mabus and Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Jonathan Greenert during a Tuesday ceremony at the Pentagon.

The elder Claudius has finally been recognized for his actions on July 30, 1942, when he led the patrol ship USS PC-566 into battle against a German submarine that had been attacking American vessels.

At the time, U-Boats were wreaking havoc on Allied shipping. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill called them “the only thing that ever really frightened me during the war.”

Minutes after the passenger ship SS Robert E. Lee was torpedoed and sunk by U-166 45 miles south of the Mississippi River Delta, Claudius’ crew spotted a periscope in the area. After Claudius ordered depth charges fired, the crew saw an oil slick in the area where the weapons were dropped, according to historical accounts of the incident. This was strong evidence that the submarine had been severely damaged or destroyed.

But when Claudius submitted his after-action report, the Navy doubted his account because he and his crew had not yet received anti-submarine training, according to National Geographic, which is making a documentary about the affair.

The Navy’s Anti-Submarine Warfare Assessment Committee even admonished the crew for a poorly executed attack, according to the U.S. Coast Guard.

Claudius was removed from

command and sent to anti-submarine warfare school.

“Claudius was shafted,” U-boat expert Rieble Kohler said, according to National Geographic. “He should have returned home a hero, but he was humiliated and sent back to school.”

But the Navy has since come around. Nearly 60 years after the fact, an company discovered U-boat wreckage very close to where the battle occurred. Last summer, oceanographer Robert Ballard explored the site with remotely piloted vehicles and conducted high-resolution mapping to try to figure out what happened. The evidence suggested that U-166 had in fact been destroyed by a depth charge.

After concluding its own historical and archeological assessment, the Naval History and Heritage Command recommended the service credit PC-556 and Claudius for sinking the U-boat and give them the appropriate recognition.

Mabus acknowledged that the Navy made a mistake.

“Seventy years later, we now know that [Claudius’] report after the actions was absolutely correct,” Mabus said at the award ceremony, according to National Geographic. “[Claudius’ ship] did sink that U-boat, and it’s never too late to set the record straight.”

Mabus also praised the captain’s bravery, noting that Claudius and his crew were operating in “very dangerous waters.”

Greenert went on social media to pay tribute.

“Claudius was essential in sighting and sinking [U-166],” Greenert wrote on his Facebook page. “The actions reflected great credit upon himself, and it was a true pleasure to be able to share the presentation with his family.”

Claudius served 33 years in the Navy and died in 1981.

“He would have felt vindicated,” Gordon Claudius said, according to National Geographic.

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Can Air Force fix its nuclear flaws?

By ROBERT BURNS
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Faced with one of its biggest challenges in years — repairing a troubled nuclear missile corps — the Air Force has taken an important first step by admitting, after years of denial, that its problems run deep and wide.

Less certain is whether it will find all the right fixes, apply them fully and convince a doubting force of launch officers, security guards and other nuclear workers that their small and narrow career field is not a dead end.

The stakes are huge. The nation’s strategy for deterring nuclear war rests in part on the 450 Minuteman 3 missiles that stand ready, 24/7, to launch at a moment’s notice from underground silos in five states.

Some question the wisdom of that strategy in an era of security threats dominated by terrorism and cyberattacks. But whatever their political, those intercontinental ballistic missiles, or ICBMs, will have to be safeguarded for years to come.

The responsibility is enormous, the cost of mistakes potentially colossal. The business end of these missiles can deliver mass destruction in a matter of minutes. Accidents, though rare, are an ever-present worry.

That’s why it can be disquieting to hear missile officers describe their unhappiness and lack of faith in nuclear force leaders.

In sworn testimony to investigators looking into allegations that two ICBM commanders at Minot Air Force Base in North Dakota, were mistreating their subordinates, one officer spoke of deep pessimism.

“I go about most of my days wishing I was in another place, in

another Air Force field,” the officer said, according to a copy of investigation testimony provided in September and obtained by The Associated Press under the Freedom of Information Act. The officer’s name was removed from the document by Air Force censors citing privacy protection.

The beliefs expressed by the Air Force and the Pentagon’s civilian leaders, after a series of AP stories revealing the issue, that the nuclear force is suffering from years of neglect, mismanagement and weak morale has yielded opposing interpretations of what it means.

Some, including experts who are critical of the Air Force, say it makes more obvious the need to invest billions to modernize the force. The flaws are fixable, they say. They cite a management review and a belligerent North Korea as reasons to make the added investment to ensure that America’s nuclear force is revitalized.

Subscribing to this view, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel announced Nov. 14 that the Pentagon would make top-to-bottom changes — more than 100 in all — in how the nuclear force is managed and operated. He said the Pentagon would spend as much as \$10 billion more over six years to improve the force. Ten days later Hagel announced his resignation, leaving questions about follow-through.

The opposing view is that this moment presents an opportunity to reconsider and restructure the nuclear force, possibly eliminating the ICBMs while enhancing the remaining sea- and air-launched nuclear forces. That view, however, is not predominant in the Obama administration, which favors the policy embraced by its predecessors, that the decades-old nuclear structure must be preserved for the foreseeable future.

What that leaves is a risk of reverting to past practices, perhaps with additional funding.

Eric Schlosser, author of “Command and Control,” a highly regarded 2013 book on the ICBM and nuclear risk, said there is little doubt that the Pentagon needs to update the nuclear missile force’s basic infrastructure.

“But that’s a short-term solution,” he said in an interview. “The bigger question is: How many land-based missiles do we need in the 21st century? How would they be deployed, and do we need them at all?”

Schlosser and others have expressed concern about morale problems in the force — an issue the Air Force had been slow to acknowledge even after the AP wrote last year about an unpublished 2011 internal force study that found evidence of “burnout” and hopelessness among missile crews and other members of the ICBM workforce.

Evidence of what some would call the Air Force’s willful disregard for its nuclear force is not hard to find. Michelle Spencer, for one, documented it in a little-noticed research paper she wrote for the Air Force in 2012. Her study team found examples of Air Force decisions to de-emphasize nuclear training and education.

“At times the signs were clear that expertise and culture had declined to the point that the (nuclear) enterprise was in danger of catastrophic failure,” she wrote.

Spencer put particular emphasis on nuclear expertise — how to expand it, how to maintain it and how to reward it.

“Without answers to these fundamental questions, the Air Force nuclear enterprise remains on the same trajectory as it has been for the last two decades — in ever-increasing decline,” she wrote.

Retailer accused of exploiting servicemembers

Daily Press (Newport News, Va.)

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and attorneys general from Virginia and North Carolina are seeking penalties and restitution from a Virginia-based retailer that caters to servicemembers, alleging it used illegal tactics to collect debts.

The complaint filed in federal court seeks \$2.5 million in consumer relief and a \$100,000 civil penalty to be imposed on Freedom Stores Inc., Freedom Acceptance Corporation and Military Credit Services.

Freedom Stores is also known as Freedom Furniture and Electronics. The Virginia-based dealer has stores located near military bases, including in Newport News, and serves members of the armed forces. It offers credit to its customers and transfers the contracts to Freedom Acceptance Corporation. The final company, Military Credit Services, provides financing.

In a press release, the consumer protection bureau said the allegations include illegally filing thousands of lawsuits in Virginia for out-of-state contracts, pressuring servicemembers by contacting

their commanding officers, and taking double payments — from both paychecks and bank accounts listed for back-up payment.

The bureau also alleged that Freedom Stores failed to properly disclose terms of pre-authorized transfers, and that Military Credit Services violated the Truth in Lending Act by improperly disclosing terms and interest rates on loans.

The proposed court order was filed in U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia and will not have the full force of law unless signed by the presiding judge.

In response to the complaint, the Freedom Store issued a state-

ment that announced a number of changes.

Company officials have voluntarily agreed to forgive more than \$2 million in loans and “provide more options regarding where default litigation will be conducted.” It has offered a course in money management fundamentals for its customers. More than 1,000 completed it, receiving a \$100 gift card. They want 5,000 customers to take the course next year.

They have set new standards to ensure customers are properly charged for loan payments and will create an internal commission of former military personnel and other experts to guide future policies.

We've been making loans of up to \$10,000 to Active Duty Military for over 64 years.

Click Today...Cash Today* www.omnilitaryloans.com “We love to say yes!”

WAR/MILITARY



RAMHAN GULAP

Afghanistan's President Ashraf Ghani, center, sits next to Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah, left, while attending an event in November for the Afghan Women's Empowerment Grants Program in Kabul.

Discord: Ghani, Abdullah split task of picking Cabinet

FROM FRONT PAGE

Ghani is eager to build a meritocratic government, his associates said, and to move away from the ethos of patronage that characterized the previous 13 years under President Hamid Karzai. Ghani has said he does not want to appoint anyone who previously has held a ministerial post, and that he wants women to assume a number of senior positions.

The stakes could not be higher. The U.S. and NATO officially will conclude their 13-year combat mission at the end of this month, with troop numbers that peaked at 140,000 in 2010 cut to about 13,000 for a training-and-support role. But the Taliban remain a potent threat, having carried out a string of high-profile attacks in the capital in recent weeks and having caused record casualties among Afghan security forces this year, killing some 5,000 troops and police.

Ghani, meanwhile, has been spearheading what could be a historic rapprochement with fellow U.S. ally Pakistan following a decade of mutual distrust — but has no foreign minister to shuttle between the capitals. Afghanistan is mired in economic crisis, but there is no permanent finance minister to advise the president nor to carry out reforms.

Ghani fired most ministers in late November — announcing the move in a

live television broadcast — and appointed their deputies in an acting capacity ahead of the announcement of the full Cabinet.

His first deadline, 45 days after his September inauguration, passed with a promise of a Cabinet before a Dec. 4 London conference of international donors. When that deadline passed, Ghani said the appointments would be made two to four weeks later. As the two weeks passed this past week, Ghani and Abdullah separately said at televised events that nominees would be announced within two weeks.

Frustration with the snail's pace of progress has fueled speculation in the local media and among many Afghans that the national unity government formed after a drawn-out, contentious election — through an agreement brokered by U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry — cannot work.

Salarzai insists it can. "The relationship between Dr. Ghani and Dr. Abdullah is smooth and they are on the same page when it comes to making the choices," he said. "Whoever is chosen has to be accountable to the president and work with the president every day, so if there were differences over the choice of officials, the government just couldn't function, and that would be self-defeating."

Nader Nadery, a former human rights activist and now head of the Afghanistan

Research and Evaluation Unit, an independent think tank, said the complete Cabinet is expected to be finalized by early January.

"All discussions indicate that with the beginning of next year, everybody expects both leaders will have a Cabinet in place," Nadery said.

Ghani and Abdullah have divided the task almost evenly between them, with the president appointing people to the most important portfolios, including the ministers of defense, finance, mines, and the intelligence service, according to a list seen by The Associated Press.

Ghani also will appoint the ministers of labor and rural development, as well as the attorney general and the head of the central bank. Abdullah would appoint the ministers of interior, foreign affairs and economy, according to the list provided by a Western diplomat on the condition that he not be identified so he could speak on internal Afghan matters. Some nominees could be announced as early as this week.

Other ministries, such as education and health, would be selected by both leaders, the diplomat and others said, with candidates asked to formally apply. Discussions were continuing on how many ministries will be in the final lineup and whether some, such as the ministry for women's affairs, will be eliminated, merged or renamed.

US sends 4 Afghans home from Guantanamo

BY NEDRA PICKLER
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon said Saturday that four Afghans from the Guantanamo Bay detention center have been returned to their home country in what U.S. officials are citing as a sign of their confidence in new Afghan President Ashraf Ghani.

Obama administration officials said they worked quickly to fulfill the request from Ghani, in effect just three months, to return the four, who had been cleared for transfer as a kind of reconciliation and a mark of improved U.S.-Afghan relations.

There is no requirement that the Afghan government further detain the men, identified as Mohammed Zahir, Shawali Khan, Abdul Ghani and Khl Ali Gul.

Eight Afghans are among the 132 detainees remaining at Guantanamo.

The move is the latest in a series of transfers during the past two months. President Barack Obama has been pushing to reduce the number of detainees as he tries to make progress toward his goal of closing the globally condemned detention center for suspected terrorists.

Administration officials, speaking on condition of anonymity because they are not authorized to discuss the matter publicly, say more transfers are expected in the coming weeks.

Guantanamo now holds the lowest number of detainees since shortly after it opened nearly 15 years ago in the wake of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. Those remaining include 64 approved for transfer.

Although the four Afghans have long been approved for transfer, the move sparked debate in Washington. Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel did not immediately sign off after Gen. John F. Campbell, the top American commander in Afghanistan, raised concerns they could pose a danger to troops in the country. Administration officials say Campbell and all military leaders on the ground have now screened the move.

"The United States is grateful to the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan for its willingness to support ongoing U.S. efforts to close the Guantanamo Bay detention facility," the Pentagon statement said. "The United States coordinated with the government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to ensure these transfers took place consistent with appropriate security and humane treatment measures."

One administration official involved in the review said most, if not all, the terrorism accusations against the men had been discarded and each is considered a low-level operative at best.

Before he can close Guantanamo, Obama faces the challenge of working out what to do with any detainees who aren't cleared for transfer — either because the United States wants to prosecute them or to continue holding them because they are considered too dangerous to release. Congress has passed legislation blocking detainees from coming to the U.S. for detention or trial.

Kurds advance against militant group in Kobani

BY BASSEM MROUE
The Associated Press

BEIRUT — Kurdish fighters advanced Saturday in the contested northern Syrian town of Kobani after heavy clashes with the Islamic State group, a Kurdish official and an activist group said.

Nawaf Khalil, a spokesman for the Kurdish Democratic Union Party, said Kurdish fighters advanced in six neighborhoods and have besieged the Islamic State-held cultural center east of town. He added that Kurdish fighters captured the Yarmouk school, southeast of Kobani,

where eight bodies of Islamic State fighters were found.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the main Syrian Kurdish force known as the People's Protection Units, or YPG, killed several Islamic State fighters.

The Islamic State group began its Kobani offensive in mid-September, capturing parts of the town as well as dozens of nearby villages. Hundreds of fighters on both sides have been killed since.

Kurdish forces have gradually pushed the extremist group back in recent weeks with the help of U.S.-led coalition

airstrikes.

The push in Kobani came a day after YPG fighters opened a corridor between their positions in northeastern Syria and Mount Sinjar in neighboring Iraq, where Iraqi peshmarga fighters have been on the offensive as well. Earlier this week, Iraqi peshmarga fighters were also able to open another corridor to Mount Sinjar.

Iraq's Kurdistan Region Security Council said peshmarga fighters launched a new offensive on Saturday toward Mount Sinjar and were able to capture the nearby area of Mushrefa.

NATION



J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE/AP

President Barack Obama speaks during a news conference Friday in the Brady Press Briefing Room of the White House in Washington.

Obama promises response to North Korean hacking

By ERIC TUCKER
AND TED BRIDIS
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama declared that Sony “made a mistake” in shelving a satirical film about a plot to assassinate North Korea’s leader, and he pledged the U.S. would respond “in a place and manner and time that we choose” to the hacking attack on Sony that led to the withdrawal. The FBI blamed the hack on the communist government.

Speaking of executives at Sony Pictures Entertainment, Obama said Friday at a year-end news conference, “I wish they had spoken to me first.... We cannot have a society in which some dictator someplace can start imposing censorship.”

Obama said he imagined situations in which dictators “start seeing a documentary that they don’t like or news reports that they don’t like.”

Sony said it had no choice but to cancel distribution of the movie because theaters were refusing to show it. North Korea denied anew that it had hacked the studio.

“There is no any connection,” U.N. diplomat Kim Song told The Associated Press. Sony criticized the film but disputed his government hacked Sony and orchestrated the movie’s shutdown: “It defamed the image of our country. It made a mockery of our sovereignty. We reject it. But there is no relation” to the hacking.

On Saturday, North Korea proposed a joint investigation with the U.S. into the hacking attack. An unidentified Foreign Ministry spokesman in Pyongyang said the U.S. would face unspecified

“grave consequences” if it rejects its proposal for the investigation.

He also said North Korea knows how to prove it’s not responsible for the hacking.

The U.S. decision to openly blame North Korea escalated a global game of brinkmanship. It happened after the disclosure of confidential Sony emails and business files and threats of terror attacks against U.S. movie theaters until Sony agreed to cancel the Christmas Day release of its comedy, “The Interview.”

Obama spoke not long after the FBI provided the most detailed accounting to date of the digital break-in. The president’s pointed criticism of Sony shifted focus to whether the studio would modify its decision, as some leading celebrities—including actors George Clooney and Sean Penn—have recommended.

“Sony is a corporation. It suffered significant damage. There were threats against its employees. I am sympathetic to the concerns that they faced,” Obama said. “Having said all that, yes, I think they made a mistake.”

Sony Pictures chief executive Michael Lynton said it was the president who was mistaken, noting that Sony canceled the release only after all major theater chains decided not to show the movie. But the Homeland Security Department concluded those threats were not credible, and the top multiplex chains in North America dropped “The Interview” only after Sony informed them it would not protest if the theaters pulled the film. Representatives for Regal, AMC, and Carmike did not immediately respond to requests for comment Friday.

“The president, the press and

the public are mistaken as to what actually happened,” Lynton told CNN. “We do not own movie theaters. We cannot determine whether or not a movie will be played in movie theaters.”

Lynton did not indicate whether Sony planned to release the movie on DVD or through video-on-demand services, which are not controlled by theaters, but the company suggested that was an option in a statement late Friday.

“The only decision that we have made with respect to release of the film was not to release it on Christmas Day in theaters, after the theater owners declined to show it,” the company said. “After that decision, we immediately began actively surveying alternatives to enable us to release the movie on a different platform.”

Obama spokeswoman Jennifer Friedman responded that the White House was pleased to hear Sony is working to distribute the film. “People should be able to decide for themselves whether or not they would like to see it,” Friedman said Friday night.

Lynton said to CNN that though YouTube distribution is “one thing that we will consider,” no major video-on-demand or e-commerce site has stepped forward to offer to distribute the film. A DVD release falls into the same category.

As for the case against North Korea, the U.S. detected communications between computer Internet addresses known to be operated by North Korea and hacking tools left behind at the crime scene, which the FBI said contained subtle clues linking them to that country’s government.

Threats won’t keep Rogen fans from seeing ‘The Interview’

By GERRY SMITH
AND MARK MILIAN
Bloomberg News

SAN FRANCISCO — Seth Rogen fans, take heart: “The Interview” eventually will make it to TV, the Internet and possibly theaters. The question is when.

Sony Pictures first needs to figure out how to recoup some of the estimated \$80 million it spent making and marketing the comedy about a plot to kill North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. Some pundits are pushing the entertainment division of Tokyo-based Sony to make the movie available instantly online. That may not be the best way.

“These are uncharted waters,” said Brian Kingman, a Glendale, Calif.-based managing director at Arthur J. Gallagher & Co., which provides insurance to the entertainment industry. “Due to the streaming sources available now and home-video platforms, I find it really hard to believe the public will not eventually see this.”

The fate of the movie hinges on insurance, Sony’s contracts with pay television services and the studio’s willingness to take additional risks. Retailers and cable providers will have their own qualms about showing the picture.

Today won’t be soon enough for supporters ranging from Netflix Inc. Chief Executive Officer Reed Hastings to former presidential candidate Mitt Romney, who have posted online

comments urging the studio to release the picture in protest of the hackers’ efforts to stifle free speech.

“Don’t cave, fight,” Romney wrote in a Dec. 17 Twitter post. He urged Culver City, Calif.-based Sony Pictures to release the film free online globally and to ask viewers to donate \$5 to fight Ebola.

Sony has no further release plans for the picture, the studio said Thursday after announcing it had abandoned plans for a theatrical release. The company Friday declined to comment on its plans for the picture, according to Bob Lawson, an outside spokesman with Rubenstein Communications.

Hastings, head of the largest online subscription service, weighed in before theaters started dropping the picture and Sony decided to abandon the release.

“Say no to cyber intimidation and yes to outrageous humor,” Hastings wrote on Dec. 10, saying he’ll buy 10 tickets. “Let’s make this THE BIGGEST movie of the year!”

Under conventional pay TV contracts, Starz, Sony’s premium cable-TV partner, may only have rights to films that are shown in theaters, according to John Burke, Los Angeles-based head of the entertainment group at Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld. Because “The Interview” wasn’t released in cinemas, Sony could be free to market the picture elsewhere, he said.

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NATION

Obama's switch on Cuba forces exile groups to adapt

By LAURA WIDES-MUNOZ
The Associated Press

MIAMI — Hours before President Barack Obama announced an end to a half-century of U.S. efforts to isolate Cuba's communist government, the Cuban American National Foundation opened the doors to its inviting, new headquarters, with a modern, glass-and-concrete lobby in the heart of Miami's Cuban exile community.

The symbolism is hard to ignore: The lobbying group was founded in 1981 by veterans of covert, U.S.-supported missions to overthrow Fidel and Raul Castro, and for many years it worked to undermine the communist government from offices in an unmarked Miami building outside Little Havana. A guard kept out unwelcome visitors, and its leader, Jorge Mas Canosa, tended to leave little room for differing opinions.

But Mas Canosa's son, Jorge Mas Santos, has transformed the foundation since his father's death in 1997, and the new building is better suited to this latest, more direct and transparent chapter in U.S.-Cuba relations.

It also reflects how a niche industry of passionate anti-Castro groups, sustained in part by millions of U.S. taxpayer dollars over the decades, will have to adapt to new ways of dealing with Cuba.

"I think now everybody is going to be — and should be — more open about the activities they do with the opposition in Cuba," the foundation's president, Pepe Hernandez, told The Associated Press in an interview.

Hernandez's own support for an armed overthrow of the Castro brothers still makes it impossible for him to set foot in Cuba. But he now says the kind of peaceful, people-to-people contacts Obama spoke of Wednesday will be more effective.

Miami has hosted die-hard anti-communists ever since Cuba's 1959 revolution, plotting the ill-fated Bay of Pigs invasion and countless failed efforts to assassinate Fidel Castro.

Dozens of anti-Castro media companies, lobbying organizations and aid groups dedicated to encouraging political change on the island are based in Miami or have strong ties to its exile community. And when the U.S. government created Radio Marti and TV Marti to influence Cuban opinions, their broadcasts found passionate audiences in South Florida, even as the Castro government jammed their signals on the island.

In the 1970s, it was dangerous for exiles to speak out against the hard-liners. Some who argued against isolating Cuba lost their legs in car bombs. Cuban-Americans who advocated ending the embargo and engaging with people in Cuba were threatened and harassed well into the 21st century.

Nearly all these organizations now focus on working with Cubans on the island, and only a few extremists advocate violence.

But many are furious at Obama.

"Barack Obama's announcement gives recognition to the illegitimate Raul Castro regime, this undermines international condemnation of this regime as the dictatorship it is," said Orlando Gutierrez. He runs the Cuban Democratic Directorate, which supports Cuban dissidents and runs a Miami-based shortwave radio program Cubans can call into from the island.

Gutierrez was leading a coalition of about 40 small groups planning to protest Obama on Saturday in Little Havana.

The Cuban American National Foundation is more interested in having a seat at the table as the Obama and Castro governments work out the details of restoring a relationship all but frozen five decades ago.

"We urge the Obama administration to confirm its support for the right of the Cuban people to be free by increasing the funding of the Cuba Democracy programs," Mas said in a statement.



RAMON ESPINOSA/AP

An opposition activist is detained by security officers Dec. 10 before the start of a march organized by the Women in White pro-democracy group on International Human Rights Day in Havana, Cuba.

Human rights in spotlight after US-Cuba agreement

By PETER ORST
AND PAUL HAVEN
The Associated Press

HAVANA — To many exiles and their allies, President Raul Castro is a brutal dictator who locks up dissenters in gulag-like jails, snuffs out political discourse and condemns his people to socialist poverty.

Cuba's supporters see the government as heroic, its sins justified by the behavior of its giant enemy to the north, and offset by the fact it provides health care and education that most developing countries could only dream of.

As often is the case, the truth lies somewhere in between.

President Barack Obama said on Friday that he began his historic call with Castro earlier in the week by delivering a 15-minute lecture on human rights and political freedom, adding: "This is still a regime that oppresses its people."

Even so, he said that US policy had failed to change Cuba for more than a half-century and it was time to try something new.

Human rights activists welcomed the overhaul of U.S.-Cuba relations, but added that the Communist government has much to answer for, including a denial of freedom of speech, the banning of independent labor unions and a lack of fair, competitive elections.

"I believe that President Obama is making the right decision, but that does not mean that our serious human rights concerns with regard to Cuba have gone away," Jose Miguel Vivanco, executive director for the Americas division at Human Rights Watch, told

The Associated Press. He said the abuses were "part of state policy, systematic and widespread."

Castro has defended the single-party political system, saying open elections would be tantamount to "legalizing the party or parties of imperialism on our soil."

Accusations of human rights abuses have dogged the Cuban government since the beginning, starting with summary trials and executions after the 1959 revolution that ousted dictator Fulgencio Batista, whose regime committed its own abuses, including torture, executions and persecution of the press.

In the years that followed, priests, gay people and others considered socially dangerous were sent to labor camps in the countryside, and political opponents were jailed or forced into exile.

The panorama has undoubtedly shifted in recent years, particularly since Fidel Castro handed power to his brother in 2006.

In 2010, Raul Castro negotiated a deal with the Roman Catholic Church and Spain to free the last of 75 political dissidents who had been rounded up in 2003 and sentenced to long jail terms, and he has allowed more church freedom on the island, building on the opening worked out between Fidel and Pope John Paul II.

Amnesty International counts five Cuban inmates as "prisoners of conscience," down sharply from years past, though Marcelha Goncalves Margerin, the group's advocacy director for the Americas, said Amnesty has campaigned for others who don't meet its strict definition.

"Cuba has always used the

excuse of the U.S. embargo and restrictions to crack down on dissidents," she said. "Once this is removed, we do hope this will generate human rights changes."

As part of the new deal with the United States, Castro agreed to free 53 people the White House describes as dissidents, though their identities have not been released. It was not clear if any of those on Amnesty's list were among them.

Elizardo Sanchez, one of the only independent human rights activists tolerated on the island, said he has been getting calls from inmates asking him if he has a list and whether they're on it, but he's had to say he doesn't know. There's been no evidence of any mass release, he said.

Sanchez also welcomed the restoration of diplomatic ties with the United States, despite what he described as a sharp increase in acts of harassment and intimidation.

While the government has moved away from sentencing dissidents to long jail terms, he said that short-term detentions have spiked under Raul Castro, from 2,074 in 2010 to 8,410 through the first 11 months of this year. Cuban authorities dismiss his findings as a fiction, and consider the dissidents to be paid stooges of Washington.

While the Castro government has not budged on the issue of a one-party state, Vivanco said that Cuba's rights problems aren't in the same league as a country such as North Korea, and said there has been movement on some key issues, such as freedom of travel, that were tightly controlled under Fidel Castro.



ALAN DIAZ/AP

Francisco "Pepe" Hernandez, right, President of the Cuban American National Foundation, talks Friday to a group of Ladies in White in Miami.

NATION

Obama: 2014 'a breakthrough year' for US

By JULIE PACE
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama said Friday that 2014 has been “a breakthrough year for America,” putting aside the fits and starts of the past 12 months to focus on achievements and the prospect of compromise with his political foes who are taking control of Congress.

“My presidency is entering the fourth quarter. Interesting stuff happens in the fourth quarter,” Obama said at a year-end news conference before leaving on a two-week vacation to Hawaii.

The news conference came at the end of what Obama titled his “Year of Action,” one in which Congress failed to take up most of his agenda and he turned to looking for ways to act on his own.

Republicans cried foul at that tactic, accusing Obama of overstepping his authority, and voters

“Take any metric that you want. America’s resurgence is real. We are better off.”

President Barack Obama

didn’t seem to think much of the strategy either, giving the president low marks in public opinion polls.

On Friday, the president acknowledged many unanticipated crises in the past year but said he enters 2015 with renewed confidence that “America is making strides where it counts.” He said he intends to make sure the economy, government and justice system work for everyone.

“I am energized,” Obama declared, trying to shake off last month’s midterm elections that brought crushing losses for his party.

He ticked off the year’s im-

provements, citing lower unemployment, a rising number of Americans covered by health insurance and a historic diplomatic opening with Cuba. He declined to describe what type of modifications he’d like to see in the communist nation, noting he doesn’t anticipate overnight changes.

“This is still a regime that oppresses its people,” Obama said. But he also said he was hopeful a new approach would bring progress.

On climate change, the president touted his own executive action and a Chinese agreement to combat global warming. He also noted that on Friday, the Treas-

ury Department announced it had sold the last investment related to the Wall Street and auto bailouts. And he said America’s combat mission in Afghanistan would soon be over.

“Take any metric that you want. America’s resurgence is real. We are better off,” he said.

Obama will return to Washington with both congressional chambers under Republican control — a first since he’s been in the White House — and attention turning to the 2016 race to replace him. While much of his agenda will face a dead end in Capitol Hill, Obama aides say he’ll look for areas of compromise on issues like trade and taxes and continue to act on his own where he can.

“I’m being sincere when I say I want to work with this new Congress to get things done,” Obama said.

Obama said he has been speaking to House Speaker John Boeh-

ner, R-Ohio, and incoming Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., about how they can make progress.

“They are serious about wanting to get things done. The tax area is one area where we can get things done,” Obama said. He said he wanted to see more fairness and simplicity, but he cautioned, “The devil’s in the details.”

He said he also wants to see upgrades to the America’s deteriorating roadways along with tax reform.

Obama faces continued violent upheaval overseas next year, particularly in the Middle East. The U.S. is maintaining troops in Iraq and Afghanistan to help local forces deal with terrorist threats in both countries, while continuing airstrikes against Islamic State militants in Syria and Iraq. And Russia continues its assertive actions in Ukraine, leading Obama to impose economic sanctions.

NY mayor caught between protests, police

By JONATHAN LEMIRE
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Mayor Bill de Blasio was elected last year after making promises to keep crime low while improving relations between police and the community. As the tensions between those promises continue to mount, Friday showed just how tricky threading that needle has been.

In the morning, de Blasio met with leaders of the protests that have swept through New York City in the weeks after a grand jury declined to indict the police officer who placed Eric Garner in a fatal chokehold while trying to arrest him.

In the afternoon, he ventured to New York Police Department headquarters to heap praise on the force, a week after an angry police union circulated a petition to bar him from any NYPD funerals.

And in the evening, a pair of protests — one pro-police, the other against — were held outside City Hall, with each side yelling at the other while claiming a lack of support from its occupant.

“The mayor is making a big mistake. The police are the most important thing to control what goes on in this city,” said Andrew Insardi, whose brother is a retired NYPD officer.

De Blasio, the city’s first Democratic mayor in a generation, formerly was an activist who, were he not holding office, likely would have participated in the protest marches that have become a near-nightly ritual after a Staten Island grand jury declined to charge the officer, who is white, in the death of Garner, who was black and repeatedly yelled “I can’t breathe!” in his final moments, which were captured on video.

The mayor has voiced support

Prosecutor: Some witnesses clearly lied about Ferguson

The Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — Some witnesses before the grand jury that investigated the shooting death of Michael Brown, 18, obviously lied under oath, a prosecutor said Friday.

St. Louis County Prosecutor Bob McCulloch, who convened the grand jury in August, was interviewed by KTRS Radio in St. Louis. It was his first interview since he announced on Nov. 24 that the grand jury would not indict Ferguson officer Darren Wilson in the shooting of Brown, who was black and unarmed.

“Clearly, some were not telling the truth,” McCulloch said.

He made reference to one woman who claimed to have seen the shooting. McCulloch said she “clearly wasn’t present. She recounted a story right out of the newspaper” that backed up Wilson’s version of events, he said.

McCulloch did not return messages left with his office

by The Associated Press on Friday.

The shooting by a white police officer on Aug. 9 spurred unrest in St. Louis, and the subsequent decision not to indict triggered protests nationwide and debates about race relations and police departments that patrol minority neighborhoods. The demonstrations and discussions were resumed after a New York grand jury decided this month not to indict a white police officer for his role in the chokehold death of a black man.

In the radio interview, McCulloch also defended the decision to make the announcement at night, saying it was best for schools and allowed business owners time to decide whether to open the next day.

Congresswoman Karla May is pushing for a state investigation of McCulloch, and whether he “manipulated” the grand jury into the decision.

more serious crimes.

De Blasio also took pains to say he supports police Commissioner William Bratton and, hours later, in a speech at a NYPD promotions ceremony, heaped praise on officers for their restraint during the protests.

“There is a respect, in some cases, even an awe, at what his department has done in recent weeks,” he said. “This is the finest police force in the land.”

De Blasio was met with polite



BEBETO MATTHEWS/AP

Mayor Bill de Blasio, left, and New York Police Department Commissioner Bill Bratton listen during a press conference after attending a promotion ceremony for police officers on Friday.

applause from the crowd at the auditorium at 1 Police Plaza, a far cry from the vitriol directed his way recently from the police unions. Furious that the mayor invoked the warnings he has given his son, who is half black, about being careful around police in light of the Garner decision, the unions accused de Blasio of abandoning them.

The main rank-and-file police union went a step further and began a push to prohibit de Blasio

and City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, his ally, from attending any funeral of any officer killed in the line of duty.

The unions themselves steered clear of the small pro-police rally outside City Hall. A few dozen people, including some wearing T-shirts bearing the words “I can breathe,” stared down a larger, louder crowd that denounced police violence and took up chants like “How do you spell racist? N.Y.-P-D” and “Black lives matter.”

NATION

NASA 'emailed' wrench to space station

BY RACHEL FELTMAN
The Washington Post

Now that the International Space Station has a 3-D printer, engineers can design new tools on the ground and then beam them up to space.

In September, Made In Space Inc. shipped a 3-D printer to the astronauts at the space station. In November, it printed its first object — a replacement part for itself.

But this is the first time it has printed a specially designed tool on demand, which is exactly the kind of work its designers hoped it would do.

"The socket wrench we just

manufactured is the first object we designed on the ground and sent digitally to space, on the fly," Made In Space founder Mike Chen wrote on Medium. "This is the first time we've ever 'emailed' hardware to space."

Why's that so great? Chen and his colleagues were responding to a request from astronaut Barry Wilmore, who needed a ratcheting socket wrench. Until now, that kind of request would take months to fulfill — Wilmore would have had to wait for the next mission to the space station to carry the tool up.

Instead, Chen and his team designed the wrench for printing, then sent the design up to the

space station by way of NASA.

"Because it's a lot faster to send digital data (which can travel at the speed of light) to space than it is to send physical objects (which involves waiting months to years for a rocket), it makes more sense to 3D-print things in space, when we can, instead of launching them," Chen wrote. And that means that astronauts can do their work more quickly and for less money.

The tech could also be a lifesaver: During the infamous Apollo 13 mission, astronauts were forced to build new Carbon Dioxide scrubbers on the fly out of whatever materials they had on hand. With the lunar module's clean oxygen run-

ning out, engineers on the ground raced to design a makeshift solution and to relay building instructions to the astronauts on board. But what if they had been able to augment the supplies on board with custom-designed pieces that could be printed at will?

And this quick, cheap way of getting tools into space will only become more useful when we venture beyond our own planet's orbit.

"When we do set up the first human colonies on the moon, Mars and beyond, we won't use rockets to bring along everything we need," Chen wrote. "We'll build what we need there, when we need it."



TIM WRIGHT/AP

Cool tourist spot

Visitors view a section of cooled lava Friday in Pahoa, Hawaii. The lava flow that began on June 27 continues to slow and officials estimate it will reach a shopping center in about eight days. Gov. David Ige, who visited Pahoa on Thursday, said the eruption has been ongoing for 30 years and the flow has stretched more than 13 miles.

BlackBerry, Boeing to offer self-destructing spy phone

BY JULIE JOHNSON
AND GERRIT DE VYNCK
Bloomberg News

CHICAGO — Boeing is teaming up with BlackBerry on a secretive, self-destructing smartphone developed for use by U.S. defense and homeland security employees and contractors.

The partnership showcases a push by Boeing, the second-largest U.S. defense contractor, into software development as sales slow for its military hardware amid Pentagon budget cuts. BlackBerry gains a new way to hold on to its government base as commercial sales decline.

"We're pleased to announce that Boeing is collaborating with BlackBerry to provide a secure mobile solution for Android devices utilizing our BES12 plat-

form," John Chen, chairman and chief executive officer of Waterloo, Ontario-based BlackBerry, said during an earnings call Friday. "That, by the way, is all they allow me to say."

The Chicago-based aerospace company has been testing its secure smartphone, known as the Boeing Black, with BlackBerry's main business enterprise server product, known as BES, which provides software that allows large corporations and government departments to keep track of their employees' devices. The server is compatible with Android and iPhone handsets.

The companies are "pursuing a number of opportunities" that would pair the Boeing device with BlackBerry's server, Andy Lee, a Boeing spokesman, said in a phone interview.

"Boeing has decades of experience providing defense and security customers with secure communications," Lee said. "We are working with BlackBerry to help them ensure the BES12 operating system is compatible with, and optimized for use by, the ultra-secure mobile devices favored by the defense and security community."

Since taking over last year, Chen has focused on providing software and security for governments and corporations, while also introducing new phones that cater to business users, like the Passport and the Classic, which was introduced early last week.

Boeing has released few details about the inner workings of the phone, which it says in a brochure "was designed with security and modularity in mind."

While the Boeing Black may look like a thicker cousin to other widely used Android devices, it's packed with features out of a John le Carré novel, including triggers that can cause the handset to self-destruct.

The phone is manufactured as a sealed device with epoxy around its casing and screws and a tamper-proof covering over the screw-heads "to identify attempted disassembly," Bruce Olcott, outside counsel to Boeing, said in a Feb. 24 letter to the Federal Communications Commission requesting that confidential design details be kept under wraps.

"Any attempt to break open the casing of the device would trigger functions that would delete the data and software contained within the device and make the device inoperable," Olcott wrote.

High court won't stop gay marriages in Florida

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — The U.S. Supreme Court on Friday refused to block gay marriages in Florida, the latest of about three dozen states allowing same-sex weddings.

In a one-paragraph order, the court decided not to step in to the Florida case. A federal judge previously declared Florida's ban on gay marriage unconstitutional and said same-sex marriage licenses could start being issued in the state after Jan. 5 unless the Supreme Court intervened.

"This is a thrilling day for all Florida families," Daniel Tilley, an attorney for the American Civil Liberties of Florida, said in a statement.

Feds warn US travelers to be extra careful

WASHINGTON — The State Department is warning American travelers abroad to be extra cautious over the holidays.

In a worldwide travel alert issued Friday, the department says an attack last week in Australia highlights the need to be vigilant. The alert says U.S. citizens traveling abroad should be mindful that terrorist groups, or those inspired by them, can pose unpredictable threats in public venues.

The alert says an analysis of past attacks and threat reporting strongly suggests that terrorists are focused on hotels, shopping areas, places of worship and schools.

Prepackaged caramel apples tied to 4 deaths

WASHINGTON — Health officials are warning consumers to avoid prepackaged caramel apples because they are linked to four deaths and more than two dozen illnesses in 10 states.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said it knows of 28 cases in which people were sickened with the same strains of the bacterial illness listeria, and at least 26 were hospitalized. Of those, five died. Listeriosis contributed to four of the deaths; a fifth person who died had a strain of listeria linked to the caramel apples, but health officials do not think listeriosis caused that person's death.

Lawyer: Woman did not mean to hit pedestrians

TORRANCE, Calif. — The attorney for a 56-year-old woman accused in the deaths of four people, including a 6-year-old boy, said it was an accident when she ran her car into nearly a dozen pedestrians outside a California church, describing her as someone who "does not live her life recklessly."

Three days ago, three days ago, people that knew her couldn't believe that she'd be in this situation," said Jeffrey Gray, attorney for Margo Bronstein.

Gray pleaded not guilty on Bronstein's behalf Friday to four counts of gross vehicular manslaughter and one count of driving under the influence of a drug causing injury.

From The Associated Press

WORLD

Drone strike said to kill 5 militants in Pakistan

The Associated Press

ISLAMABAD — A U.S. drone fired two missiles at a militant hideout in northwestern Pakistan on Saturday, killing at least five Taliban fighters, two security officials said.

In a separate operation, the military said Pakistani security forces killed five “terrorists” on the outskirts of Peshawar, where the Pakistani Taliban carried out a school massacre last week, killing 148 people, mainly children.

The attack shocked the nation and prompted a massive military response in the tribal regions along the Afghan border, long-time strongholds of both foreign and local militants. Pakistani airstrikes and ground operations in the Khyber region — where the school attack is believed to have emanated — have killed around 200 militants.

The drone strike took place in the town of Datta Khel in North

Waziristan, where Pakistani troops have been carrying out a major operation against local and foreign militants since June, the officials said.

The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to the media, said the men killed in the drone strike fought under local Pakistani Taliban commander Hafiz Gul Bahadur. It was not immediately clear if the drone strike was connected to the school massacre.

U.S. officials rarely if ever comment on the covert drone program, which has eliminated several top militants but has also resulted in civilian casualties, making it extremely unpopular among Pakistanis.

Also on Saturday, a security official and a police officer were killed during a shootout with militants in Peshawar, police officer Ijaz Ahmed said. He said 20 militants were killed.

First of 400 extremists hanged in wake of Peshawar school massacre

From wire reports

ISLAMABAD — Pakistan executed two convicted terrorists Friday, the first of 400 militants headed to the hangman’s noose amid a government crackdown ordered after Taliban attackers gunned down 148 children and teachers Tuesday at a school in the northern city of Peshawar.

The sentences against Aqeel “Doctor Usman” and Arshad Mehmood were carried out at the prison in the eastern city of Faisalabad where they had been incarcerated.

Both were former soldiers convicted by court-martial. Their warrants of execution had been issued Thursday by the army chief of staff, Gen. Raheel Sharif, in a move indicative of Pakistan’s zero-tolerance response to the school massacre.

Aqeel had been captured while

leading an October 2009 raid on the army’s headquarters in Rawalpindi. Mehmood was involved in a December 2003 twin suicide car bombing of the cavalcade of Gen. Pervez Musharraf, Pakistan’s military ruler at the time.

The government instructed jail administrators Friday to execute 20 other people on death row whose clemency appeals Musharraf had turned down while he held the dual office of president.

Those hangings will take place over the weekend and early next week, Interior Minister Nisar Ali Khan indicated.

The Ministry of Interior said its legal advisers were examining the case records of 378 convicted terrorists with a view to expediting their death sentences.

More than 3,000 convicted terror-

ists are imprisoned in Pakistan and will be executed in 2015, after Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif lifted a six-year moratorium on capital punishment Wednesday, which had been introduced by a previous administration.

The Pakistani Taliban vowed Friday to avenge the executions with attacks on the teenage children of army generals and politicians.

“We will avenge the death of each holy warrior by causing mourning in their homes,” it said in a statement emailed to journalists in Pakistan.

The leader of the Pakistani Taliban, Maulana Fazlullah, has found himself increasingly isolated since ordering the attack on the Peshawar school.

Fazlullah is notorious for also ordering the October 2012 shooting of teenager Malala Yousufzai, the 2014 Nobel peace laureate.



TRO HERRERA/AP

25th anniversary of Panama invasion

Clara Tristan releases a paper lantern Friday in the Panama City Bay as part of a public event held as a tribute to the victims of the 1989 U.S. invasion of Panama. On Dec. 20, 1989, U.S. armed forces in an operation code-named Just Cause invaded Panama to overthrow Panama’s dictator Manuel Antonio Noriega and the Panamanian Defense Forces were dissolved.

Extremists in Nigeria turn guns on the elderly

The Associated Press

MAIDUGURI, Nigeria — Islamic extremists in northeast Nigeria are turning their guns on elderly people, killing more than 50 last week in a new tactic that has instilled more fear in areas the militants call an Islamic caliphate.

Residents from five villages say people too elderly to flee the Gwoza local government area are being rounded up and taken to two schools where the militants open fire on them. The villages are about 80 miles southeast of Maiduguri, the Borno state capital.

“What they are doing now is to assemble the aged people — both men and women — and then they just open fire on some of them,” said Muhammad Gava, a spokesman for civil defense groups in the area. More than 50 people had been killed at Government Day Secondary School in Gwoza, he said.

A villager who had fled said more elderly people are being gathered and shot at Uvageh Central Primary School. The villager spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of endanger-

ing his trapped parents. Government officials did not immediately comment on the reports.

Nigeria’s military said soldiers are patrolling “in search of terrorists” and “to verify abductions” Friday around the village of Gumburi, where witnesses say extremists kidnapped at least 185 people a week ago.

In separate attacks Friday, witnesses said Boko Haram struck at Damagum and Mamudu trucks in Yobe state, bombing government buildings, the police station and military barracks.

Russia dismisses new US sanctions as useless

The Associated Press

MOSCOW — Russia on Saturday dismissed new U.S. sanctions as useless and said it was poised to wait as long as it takes for the U.S. to recognize its historic right to the Crimean Peninsula.

Following several rounds of sanctions earlier this year, President Barack Obama on Friday approved new restrictions on Crimea which Russia annexed in March after a hastily called referendum.

The Russian foreign ministry on Saturday expressed regret that “the United States and Canada still cannot get over the results of a free vote in Crimea in March,” the referendum that was condemned by the international community as illegal and held under the guns of Russian troops.

Canada on Friday announced travel bans for dozens of individuals as well as restrictions on the export of technology used in Russia’s oil industry.

In a pithy statement, Moscow insisted that the new sanctions won’t push Russia to give up Crimea since it is a “historic and integral part of Russia” and said it was working on unspecified measures to retaliate.

The ministry referred to Cuba where it took the U.S. decades to restore diplomatic relations. “The White House took half a century to admit that blockading Cuba with sanctions was useless: well, we can wait too,” the statement said.

Obama’s order prohibited U.S. companies and individuals from exporting or importing any goods, services or technology to or from Crimea. Likewise, U.S. individuals or companies cannot buy real estate or businesses in Crimea or finance Crimean companies.

It also freezes any assets in the U.S. of individuals determined by the U.S. Treasury Depart-

“The White House took half a century to admit that blockading Cuba with sanctions was useless: well, we can wait too.”

statement issued by Russia in response to new U.S. sanctions

ment to be operating in Crimea.

Obama’s order follows a European Union ban on investment in Crimea and other economic restrictions including measures aimed at keeping tourists away. The new measures on investment, services and trade, announced Thursday, beef up the EU’s previous response to Russia’s annexation of the peninsula.

Europeans and EU-based companies are barred from buying real estate or businesses in Crimea, financing Crimean companies or supplying services as of Saturday.

In addition, EU operators will no longer be allowed to offer tourism services to Crimea’s Black Sea beaches or other destinations. Cruise ships owned by an EU-based company or flying an EU member state’s flag will also no longer be allowed to call at Sevastopol or other Crimean ports, except in an emergency.

Moscow’s harsh anti-American rhetoric comes a time when the Kremlin seems to be departing from its defiant stance on a settlement in eastern Ukraine. It has, for instance, given up its persistent suggestion that the only solution to the bloody conflict in the east is the federalization of Ukraine.

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OPINION

The war on Pakistani schoolchildren

By TERENCE McCoy

Once, if you wanted to speak with the man known as "Mullah Radio," you had to travel to the remote, mountainous lands of northwest Pakistan. There, between radio segments, the man who now leads an insurgency that just killed scores of schoolchildren, would perhaps drop by on his white horse. That's what happened when journalist Nicholas Schmidle arrived at the mullah's compound in 2007.

At the time, the mullah named Maulana Fazlullah was riding high. Tens of thousands of people in the Swat Valley were tuning in to his illegal FM radio station, from which he excoriated the evils of female education and urged jihad. His influence was growing at such a rapid clip village women donated earrings and bangle bracelets to the cause. A cult figure was born. "He is totally out of control," one local leader told Schmidle, who found Fazlullah particularly dangerous. "His ambitions exceeded the mere creation of an Islamic emirate in Swat," Schmidle wrote in the New York Times.

Those ambitions, which propelled Fazlullah into the Pakistani Taliban's top slot late last year, manifested themselves once more on Tuesday in a particularly macabre fashion: 148 students and teachers slain by Taliban gunmen on Tuesday at a school in northwest Pakistan.

By Fazlullah's twisted logic, the attacks made sense. The killings were a response to a recent military crackdown on Taliban activities following years of ambivalent policies toward homegrown Islamic militants. They resented the Taliban's presence and power to cause mayhem. But the killings also reflected Fazlullah's desire to obliterate women's chances to secure an education. Since 2009, Buzzfeed noted, militants have targeted more than 1,000 schools — a time frame that closely traces the rise of Fazlullah.

This isn't Fazlullah's first assault on education. In 2012, he claimed responsibility for an assassination attempt on Malala Yousufzai, who wrote a widely read anonymous blog describing the horrors of life under the Taliban and by this year's



SITE INTEL GROUP/AP

This updated image provided the SITE Intel Group, an American private terrorist threat analysis company, shows Mullah Fazlullah in Pakistan.

Nobel Prize Peace winner. So Fazlullah allegedly dispatched a gunman who shot her in the head while she was traveling in a school van.

Fazlullah affects a different persona than some other notorious militants. He lacks the mystique of the Islamic State's Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, who rarely makes public appearances and is reported to don a mask in the presence of subordinates. And he lacks the wild eyes of Boko Haram's Abubakar Shekau, who grins ear-to-ear when promoting his group's latest abomination. Rather, Fazlullah appears to be an intensely charismatic figure, more interested in publicity than combat, academic and journalistic accounts suggest.

"Fazlullah is not a born field commander and his skill lay in his ability to inspire those around him through his words," wrote a BBC correspondent who met him. "... Nobody then could have predicted that he would become the head of Pakistan's Taliban just a few years on."

One measure of the damage done to the relatively few Americans who answered the call to duty after 9/11 is that some 700,000 veterans out of the more than 2.5 million who served in Iraq and Afghanistan had been awarded disability status connected to their military service as of last year.

The number will keep rising as years pass, but one of the enduring lessons of war is that the costs don't end when the shooting stops. And in this case, the shooting is not fully over. President Barack Obama has authorized the use of combat forces for the limited mission of targeting leaders of al-Qaida and the Taliban who pose a continuing threat. Some 10,800 U.S. soldiers will remain in the country next year. The presence of these soldiers, and the slow but inexorable pullout has raised questions

about timing, about the future, whether it was wise to call an end to this time.

"I don't know if I'm pessimistic or optimistic," said Lt. Gen. Joseph Anderson, the departing commander, about America's reduced profile in Afghanistan. There are reasons to be both.

The new government led by President Ashraf Ghani has formed a partnership with his political rivals, at least for the moment, and he has vowed to make merited appointments in the military. The transition from one elected government to another, led by Ghani, is itself a milestone. On the doubtful side, Anderson mentioned not having "the right guys in the right places," militarily. Meanwhile, Taliban attacks have increased, Afghan military casualties have surpassed 5,000 this year, and some international aid groups and staff are pulling out.

The war is not lost, but it is not won. Either way, though, America cannot be expected to extend its commitment. Ghani's government deserves American support, and the United States, at great cost, has bought the Afghan people time to stand and fight on their own. Now it's up to them.

From this growing mass of supplicants, he drew greater power. He raised hundreds of thousands of dollars to build a two-story madrassa, later destroyed by Pakistan security forces, and he inveighed against polio vaccinations, which he called "a conspiracy of the Jews and Christians to stunt the population growth of Muslims." As his sermons gave way to threats, he adopted the zeal of the religious preacher he fancied himself.

Fazlullah eventually came to control much of the region, waging a bloody war against the Pakistani state between 2007 and 2009. The fervor he inspired — not to mention his violent criticism of the Pakistani state — made him an attractive candidate to take over the Taliban late last year when the CIA killed his predecessor, Hakimullah Mehsud, in a drone strike. Though it seemed a victory at the time, the killing elevated Fazlullah, who squashed any chance for peace negotiations with the government. "There will be no more talks," one Taliban spokesman told the Guardian.

And then came Tuesday's assault on the school in a military zone in the northwestern city of Peshawar.

Terrence McCoy writes for The Washington Post.

Time for Afghanistan to stand on its own

30,000 were wounded.

The best way to repay the pain and sacrifice of the American families who lost a loved one, as well as the soldiers who fought there, is to ensure that the nation's commitment to them never wavers. The volunteer members of the U.S. armed forces did not shirk their duty when asked to risk their lives. Their willing commitment deserves an equal measure of commitment by those back home who they fought to protect.

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OPINION

Pruitt willing to light fuses in Oklaahoma

By GEORGE F. WILL

OKLAHOMA CITY

Scott Pruitt enjoyed owning a AAA baseball cap here, but he is having as much fun as Oklahoma's attorney general, and one of the Obama administration's most tenacious tormentors. The second existential challenge to the Affordable Care Act began here.

In the first, decided in June 2012, the Supreme Court saved the ACA by reading it imaginatively. The court held that although Congress could not, in the name of regulating commerce, penalize people for not engaging in commerce (buying insurance), the penalty linked to the individual mandate actually could be considered — although Congress did not so consider it — an exercise of Congress' enumerated power to tax.

That same year, Pruitt lit another fuse, this one involving statutory rather than constitutional construction. He filed a suit that in June may contribute to the most seismic domestic development of 2015.

The suit asks the court to read the ACA unimaginatively, as meaning what it plainly says: Subsidies, in the form of tax credits, are available only to people who purchase insurance through exchanges "established by the state." Thirty-seven states have refused or failed to establish their own exchanges. The justices may be disinclined to use the ACA's legislative history, or the candor of MIT's loquacious professor Jonathan Gruber, to inform their deliberations. If, however, the justices do, they will see that Gruber, an ACA architect, says it was written to "squeeze the states" into establishing exchanges: "If you're a state and you don't set up an exchange, that means your citizens don't get their tax credits."

If the court holds that the ACA means

what it plainly and purposively says, then billions of dollars have been disbursed through federal exchanges contrary to the law. The ACA will be crippled until Barack Obama negotiates help from a Republican-controlled Congress.

The Founders' bargain, Pruitt says, was that the states would surrender some sovereignty in exchange for representation in the federal government. But the growth of federal power has tended to reduce states to administrative extensions of the federal government, leaving them with "pre-emption without representation." So Pruitt has established within his office a "federalism unit" aimed at revitalizing federalism as a system of "vertical checks and balances."

Oklahoma is among 24 states in a suit initiated by Texas Attorney General (and Gov.-elect) Greg Abbott charging that Obama's unilateral changes in immigration policies are unconstitutional. The complaint is that Obama has injured these states by usurping the legislative power of Congress, in which the states' interests are represented, and by creating, through executive fiat, policies that will impose substantial costs on the states.

Another target in Pruitt's sights is the Environmental Protection Agency, which claims to have discovered in the Clean Air Act of 1970 a hitherto unnoticed authority perhaps sufficient to eliminate existing coal-fired power plants. Joined by 16 other state attorneys general, Pruitt argues that the federal government has the power to institute a national energy policy, which implicates the entire economy. But it cannot do so, pre-empting various of the states' powers, simply by locating authority in the creative reading of a 44-year-old statute.

And then there is the matter of puddles. Pruitt and other attorneys general are re-



sisting the EPA's and the Army Corps of Engineers' contention that the 42-year-old Clean Water Act has a hitherto unsuspected capaciousness. The act, which allows regulation of "navigable waters," was passed under Congress' power to regulate interstate commerce, so "navigable waters" have been understood to be those suitable for transporting people and products between the states.

But M. Reed Hopper and Todd F. Gaziانو of the Pacific Legal Foundation, writing in The Wall Street Journal, say the EPA now wants to control not just wetlands and other non-navigable waters but any water or normally dry land with a "hydrological connection" to actual navigable waters. These include, Hopper and Gaziانو say, "arroyos in the desert as well as ditches and culverts

hundreds of miles from" actual navigable waters. Pruitt and other attorneys general are contesting this bureaucratic imperialism whereby the EPA, by aggregating almost all the nation's water and much of its land into EPA-designated "ecoregions," could regulate — and stifle — much of the nation's economic activity.

The good news about the ACA, immigration and the EPA is that federalism remains a fact. Come January, federalism's vitality will be an increasingly inconvenient truth for Obama. Twenty-seven states will have Republican attorneys general who can try to restrain the federal Leviathan much as the Lilliputians restrained Gulliver.

George F. Will is a member of Washington Post Writers Group.

Obama's top '14 flick dovetails with his presidency

By ALYSSA ROSENBERG

The Washington Post

In a forthcoming interview with People magazine, President Barack Obama names Richard Linklater's "Boyhood" his favorite movie of the year. I'm with him; Linklater's gentle portrait of a boy (Ellar Coltrane) growing up in Texas and balancing his love for his strained mother (Patricia Arquette) and his charming, intermittently absent father (Ethán Hawke) is one of the best movies of the year.

But as the Obama presidency enters its final years, there's something particularly poignant about his affection for "Boyhood." The politics of Linklater's film are subtle, but they're a clear expression of some of the same ideas that propelled Obama onto a national stage and made his bid for the presidency so exciting.

The most enduring lines in Obama's star-making speech at the 2004 Democratic National Convention are the ones in which he argued that "the pundits like to slice and dice our country into red states and blue states: red states for Republicans, blue states for Democrats. But I've got news for them, too. We worship an awesome God in the blue states, and we don't like federal agents poking around our libraries in the red states. We coach Little League in the blue states and, yes, we've got some gay friends in the red states."

Those images were meant to make us think about what we have in common. But there's a less high-minded truth to them as well: There are liberal communities in



MATT LANKES/IFC FILMS

President Barack Obama told People that "Boyhood," a chronicle of a child's coming of age starring Ellar Coltrane, above, was his favorite movie of 2014.

heavily Republican states such as Texas, and libertarian and Republican constituencies in regions such as New England. That thinking animated the Democratic

National Committee's investment in building infrastructure and voter rolls for the 2016 elections, even in states that weren't likely to go blue in the short term and Obama's campaign for the presidency two years later.

"Boyhood" is set in the kinds of communities where the two Americas rub up against each other, and Mason (Coltrane), who grows from a pucky little boy into a shaggy young man with a quiet charm, is the product of their conversation. His mother, Olivia (Arquette), might have thought about turning out for Wendy Davis' filibuster of a restrictive abortion bill if she hadn't been struggling with her other responsibilities, which over the course of the film include primary custody of her two children, her efforts to finish a college degree, and two husbands, both of whom initially appear to be potential anchors before sinking into drink.

Mason Sr. (Hawke) is a fitful presence in his children's lives early in the movie, flitting in to take Mason and Samantha (Lorelai Linklater) bowling and resisting their mother's discipline. But in part because he's not burdened with the stress of parenting them, he is also the first person initially appear to be potential anchors before sinking into drink.

"Boyhood" doesn't presume to pronounce on the outcome of this cultural conversa-

tion. And Linklater is wise to present the political frictions in his film as more complex than a simple partisan divide. Mason Sr. and Olivia are as influenced by their economic and emotional needs — her for a second breadwinner, him to feel connected to something larger, which manifests first in politics and then in religion — as by whatever their party identifications might be. The movie ends on Mason's first day of college, with a hiking trip to Big Bend, a pot brownie, a pretty good day.

The optimism of Obama's 2004 vision has largely dissipated. His presidency has been defined by a resurgence of ugly racist sentiment, by a rearguard fight to defend his major legislative accomplishment, and by protracted entanglements abroad. I'm sure he likes "Boyhood" for other reasons, including its excellent performances from seasoned adults and child newcomers alike, and its strong use of the best and worst of the last decade's popular music to mark the passage of time. But I wouldn't blame him for being nostalgic for the possibility of that conversation across the partisan divide.

When Mason leaves for college, Olivia weeps at her kitchen table, telling him, "I just thought there'd be more." I can imagine Obama might have related to that as a parent of growing children who spent some of their childhood preoccupied by weightier problems than Olivia's struggle to stay afloat. But it's a fitting lament for Obama's presidency, too, and for that brief flare of promise that now seems so dim.

Alyssa Rosenberg writes The Post's Act Four web channel covering culture and politics.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Officer disarms man firing assault weapon

PA PHILADELPHIA — Philadelphia's police commissioner said an officer showed "unbelievable restraint" in disarming a man firing off an AR-15 assault weapon on a city street.

Officer Kollin Berg told WPVI-TV that he was patrolling alone Wednesday afternoon when he heard a series of gunshots and saw a man firing into the air on 20th Street in North Philadelphia.

Berg said he pulled his gun and twice shouted, "Police, drop the weapon!" before the man complied.

The station reported that Eric Barnes, 39, legally owned the gun but faces firearms violations and reckless endangerment charges.

Berg, an eight-year Army veteran who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, said he was following training.

Students expelled after district computer hack

IL ST. CHARLES — St. Charles school officials have expelled two high school students who they say shut down the district's computer network.

The (Arlington Heights) Daily Herald reported that St. Charles Unit District 303 officials said the students used their cellphones to overload the district's servers. They said teachers were blocked from various online grading and homework programs for nearly a month.

The district consulted with federal and local authorities to help track the source. The superintendent said staff members identified the students after they bragged about the hack to other students.

He said the students admitted to the attack and said they learned how to overload the servers from a fellow online video game player.

Woman, 72, slapped over Facebook snub

FL SEMINOLE — A woman is accused of slapping a 72-year-old woman who denied her friend request on Facebook.

The Tampa Bay Times reported that Rachel Anne Hayes, 27, became angry on Wednesday when the woman said the Facebook name she uses is inappropriate.

Pinellas County Sheriff's deputies told the woman told Hayes she would accept the friend request if she changed the name, which was not revealed by authorities. Hayes left the home in Seminole but returned a short time later. They fought again at the front door.

Deputies said Hayes slapped the woman several times before the woman was able to get back inside and lock the door.

Hayes was charged with aggravated battery on an elderly person.

State court upholds public intoxication law

IN INDIANAPOLIS — The Indiana Supreme Court said it's OK for police to arrest

THE CENSUS

\$400

The estimated value of the contents of one of two Salvation Army red kettles that have been stolen in Hayward, Wis., in recent weeks. WDIO-TV reported that the most recent theft happened Wednesday at a Walgreen store. Sawyer County Salvation Army Director Debbie Huebner said surveillance video shows someone put the whole structure into the back of a vehicle. Huebner said that kettle had been emptied right before the theft. But a few weeks ago, a thief cut a cable to steal a kettle from Wal-Mart that contained about \$400. The thefts have left the Sawyer County chapter with only three collection stands left.



MIGUEL ROBERTS, THE BROWNSVILLE (TEXAS) HERALD/AP

The best gift

U.S. Air Force Sgt. Jose Hernandez surprises his son, Isaiah, after waiting in a cardboard box adorned with wrapping paper Thursday morning at R.L. Martin Elementary in Brownsville, Texas. Hernandez returned early from a tour in South Korea to spend Christmas with his family.

people who get drunk and annoy others in public settings.

The court's 5-0 ruling overturned a February state Court of Appeals decision that struck down the "annoys" portion of the law as impermissibly vague. The Times of Munster reported.

The Times of Munster reported that the court's 5-0 ruling overturned a February state Court of Appeals decision that struck down the "annoys" portion of the law as impermissibly vague.

Judge rules former Marine insane

SC BEAUFORT — A judge ruled a South Carolina man was insane when he stole a fire truck while naked and then struck and killed a pedestrian.

Circuit Court Judge Carmen Mullen found Kalvin Hunt not guilty by reason of insanity on Thursday after prosecutors and Hunt's attorneys agreed on his mental state, multiple media outlets reported.

The former Marine, 28, fled

naked from the Naval Hospital in Beaufort in 2012, stole a Port Royal fire truck that was responding to a medical call at a nearby apartment complex, then struck and killed Justin Nicholas Miller before crashing into woods.

Hunt was sent for treatment to a secure care facility run by the South Carolina mental health department.

Hunt was dishonorably discharged from the Marines after his arrest.

ATM taken from events center found at airport

IA DES MOINES — An automatic teller machine stolen from the Iowa Events Center in September has been found at the Des Moines International Airport.

Police said an airport employee told police he found an ATM when he was checking the airport grounds shortly before 2 p.m. Wednesday.

The Des Moines Register reported that police checked the ma-

chine's serial number and found it had been reported stolen from the Iowa Events Center on Sept. 11.

Surveillance video showed a man entering the Iowa Events Center by pushing a potted plant through a glass window, then prying the ATM from the wall.

The man then broke a different glass door to escape. Police found tire tracks in the grass and mud near that door but have not made any arrests.

Gold tooth dropped in holiday donation kettle

MO KANSAS CITY — A Salvation Army spokesman said someone has dropped a gold tooth into a holiday collection kettle.

Spokesman Rick Carroll said Thursday that he's found diamond rings, silver bars and four-leaf clovers but has never heard of a tooth donation. He said the item could be worth \$100, depending on the amount of gold it contains.

Kansas City's Red Kettle Campaign began Nov. 7 and is cur-

rently running about \$50,000 behind where it was a year ago.

Drunk man shot while entering wrong house

CA BENICIA — Police said an intoxicated man was shot by a suburban San Francisco homeowner after breaking into a house he thought was his own.

The Oakland Tribune reported that the man was taken to an area hospital with injuries that were not life-threatening. He was later identified as True Hatch, 24.

Hatch told police he believed he was at the right house in Benicia, a suburb north of San Francisco. They said he thought he had just locked himself out after a night of drinking, but police said Hatch doesn't live in the city.

Benicia police Lt. Mike Greene said the homeowner, 66, shot Hatch once in the torso early Wednesday. Police are not pursuing criminal charges against the homeowner.

From wire reports

LIFESTYLE



Courtesy of JNTO

The founder of Nikka Whisky traveled to Scotland in 1918 to learn the whisky distilling process.

Taking top spot from the Scots

Japan gaining worldwide attention for its award-winning whiskies

By ERIK SLAVIN
Stars and Stripes

The Japanese topped the Scots for a major whisky honor, to the surprise of many who know Scotch only by reputation — and practically no one who regularly drinks high-quality whisky.

Suntory's 2013 Yamazaki Sherry Cask whisky earned top billing in the influential "Jim Murray's Whisky Bible 2015" for a drink of "near indescribable genius."

Media worldwide wrote stories asking how this could possibly happen to Scotland, which fell out of the top five and got beat out for Murray's second- and third-place spots by Kentucky bourbon and rye. The attention drew comparisons to a famous 1976 Paris wine tasting, where lightly regarded California wines trounced French offerings in a blind judging.

The reality is that there is still plenty of good whisky in Scotland, but Japan's best whiskies have been every bit Scotland's equals for years. It's simply a question of personal preference.

Japan's expertise leaves U.S. servicemembers based in the country with an opportunity to try these whiskies at a fraction of what they cost as imports. For example, Nikka's Taketsuru blended malt costs about \$37 in Japan, or \$73 at U.S. retailer Total Wine.

The giant of Japan's whisky industry is Suntory, which got even larger when it acquired Jim



ERIC GUZMAN/Stars and Stripes

A selection of Suntory whisky product samples was presented to members of the press during a briefing and tasting session at Foreign Press Center Japan on Nov. 13.

Beam this year.

Some companies see the quality of their products head south after massive growth, but there is no evidence of that at Suntory, judging by its annual international awards. Its single-malt Yamazaki brand is prized; however, its 17- and 21-year-old Hibiki blends, about \$70 and \$135 at the Narita duty-free shop, are some of the most complex yet easy-drinking whiskies on the Japanese market.

"The key to the Japanese success is that they never got cocky," said Mike Murphy, import manager for Japan trading company Whisk-e. "They never thought

their whisky was good enough."

Murphy first came to Japan as a Navy sailor; 30 years later, he's seen the industry transformed.

The big Japanese whisky distilleries are great at understanding their clientele, Murphy explained.

Through the 1970s, they knew their customers were going to drink whisky with soda, or over lots of ice — unlike drinkers in countries who typically drank high-quality scotch straight or with a splash of water. Consequently, distillers made whisky that would stand up to being watered down.

As Japan boomed in the 1980s,

business travelers began discovering its best drinks. Distillers responded, buying peat from Scotland and studying that country's techniques more closely.

As they learned the European ways, they began adding their own touches.

The introduction of mizunara oak casks gave several whiskies distinctive flavors. For example, Suntory's current Yamazaki Mizunara carries a lingering vanilla taste, along with some spiciness and cinnamon.

That said, Japan's whiskies don't conform to one style.

Shinji Fukuyo, Suntory's chief blender, says the thing that unites Japan's best whiskies is devotion to high-quality ingredients. "Very pure and clean water makes very sophisticated spirits," Fukuyo said. "The Japanese consumer has very sophisticated taste."

Obsessive attention to detail is also critical. Fukuyo displayed photographs of a trip to Spain, where he visited the lumberjacks cutting the wood for sherry casks that would hold his whisky.

There are a handful of other major players in Japanese whisky, including Nikka, which began after its founder sailed to Scotland in 1918, returned to Hokkaido with a Scottish bride and opened a distillery. A television show based on the couple is now an NHK hit.

Ichiro's Malt is what the cool kids are drinking, though you're less likely to find it at a typical

What's in a name?

Definitions of whisky/whiskies can vary between nations and sometimes even between states.

Scotch is defined by The United Kingdom's Scotch Whisky Act in detail. The quick version: it has to be produced in Scotland for water and malted barley, and processed at that Scottish distillery into a mash. If it's not Scottish, it's not really Scotch. The United States recognizes the U.K. claim on Scotch.

Irish whisky must be made in the Republic of Ireland or Northern Ireland to be considered legitimate, according to European Union and U.S. law. There are many smaller quality distilleries, but the best known globally are Jameson and Bushmills.

Blended whiskies comprise the vast majority of the world's supply. They are blends of whiskies and grains. They often provide excellent value. Higher-end blends are mixed to bring out the best qualities of several whiskies.

Single malt is the product of a single distillery. These are rarer than blends and tend to be more expensive, though quality blends can be just as pricey. Some single malt whiskies are also single grain whiskies.

Corn whisky is distilled from a mash of at least 80 percent corn. Unlike other whiskies, it need not be stored in an oak container, according to U.S. federal law.

Bourbon, rye, wheat and rye malt are whiskies that cannot exceed 80 percent alcohol and contain no less than 51 percent of their respective grain. Many international trade agreements consider the name Bourbon a U.S. trademark. Although it can be made anywhere in the U.S., bourbon is strongly associated with Kentucky and Tennessee.

— Erik Slavin

izakaya in Japan. Ichiro's rarer bottles are selling for thousands of dollars at auctions in China.

Mars is another smaller distillery with a cult following, while beer giant Kirin runs a lesser-known distillery in Gotemba.

If all the talk of vanilla and wood casks makes whisky sound too complicated, it's only because of the passion of its devotees.

If you're new to whisky and can't readily identify the scents and tastes in the distiller's notes, that's OK too. For that matter, Murphy and plenty of longtime whisky fans have no problem with Jack Daniel's, or a whisky and soda in between drams of Japanese single malt.

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LIFESTYLE



PHOTOS BY MARK HOFFMAN, MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL/TNS

Rudolph, Wis., Postmaster Becky Trzebiatowski, right, says her tiny post office receives thousands of pieces of mail from all over the world every year before Christmas. At left are stamps marking the 50th anniversary of "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" on TV.

Christmas card season at tiny Wisconsin post office a busy one due to stamp featuring famous reindeer

By MEG JONES
The Wichita Eagle

They start arriving in the spring and summer, long before the first snowflakes fall and malls switch to Christmas music.

It might sound odd to think of Christmas cards in March or July, but the tiny post office in this community that shares a name with a certain crimson-nosed ungulate embraces the holiday. Tens of thousands of cards and letters flow through the Rudolph post office each year because of the unique cancellation stamp featuring a tiny drawing of the famous reindeer.

And this year, business is even more brisk than usual after the U.S. Postal Service issued a commemorative set of Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer forever stamps to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the popular television show.

Rudolph — population 436 — was even chosen for the first day

of sale ceremony of the Christmas stamps featuring the TV characters.

"We get boxes of cards from all over the world requesting the cancellation," said Becky Trzebiatowski, who has been Rudolph postmaster since 2008. "I'm not surprised now, but I was initially."

On the second Saturday of December, the central Wisconsin community just west of Stevens Point schedules a Country Christmas event with live reindeer, music, dog sled pulling, food, a parade and fireworks.

That was the day — Dec. 13 this year — when Trzebiatowski and a corps of workers hand-stamped each letter and card with the Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer postmark.

Many people send in their cards and letters before time with notes asking Trzebiatowski to cancel them on Dec. 13. They range from stamp collectors to folks who like the added bit of holiday on their Christmas card envelopes.

Typically they're sent in boxes or large envelopes to the Rudolph postmaster, and Trzebiatowski keeps them until Dec. 13, when they're canceled with the special postmark.

For those who get their cards in after Dec. 13, Trzebiatowski will continue to use the Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer cancellation stamp through Christmas.

While a normal day's business at the Rudolph post office is one to two long trays of letters and cards, on the second Saturday of December the volume balloons to 18 to 20 trays, or the equivalent of about 10,000 pieces of mail.

This year there were also numerous collectors seeking the first day of sale cancellation stamp. On one morning, Trzebiatowski pulled out a box of letters from stamp collectors who included envelopes to be stamped and returned to them.

The letters came from New York, Pennsylvania, Kansas, Kentucky, North Carolina, California, Texas, Ohio and the country of Belgium. Some include glassine envelopes to prevent damage on the return trip and notes thanking Trzebiatowski.

Established in 1856, Rudolph is named after the first child born in the area, and not Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer, which first appeared in a 1939 booklet published by Montgomery Ward.

The Rudolph decorative postmark has been a tradition since 1945 when the postmaster created it as a Girl Scout project. Twelve years ago the town rattled things up a notch by starting the annual Country Christmas celebration.

Each spring, schoolchildren in Rudolph enter their designs for the Christmas cancellation stamp in a contest. This year's winning design features a side view of Rudolph wearing a Santa hat with holes for his antlers and a scarf with "2014."

Rachael Sackmann lives four blocks from a post office in Stevens Point, but she packed up her 90 Christmas cards plus a few bills last week to travel 11 miles to Rudolph. Sitting at a table in the post office lobby, she used the prancing Rudolph stamp with red ink to decorate the envelopes.

"I've been coming out here for years. I mail out 90 cards each year. I even brought my electric bill," said Sackmann, who joked, "I've got to put the electric company in the (holiday) mood."

Through Dec. 23, the Rudolph post office will stay open through the lunch hour — from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. — to handle the foot traffic streaming through the tiny lobby with a Rudolph- and reindeer-festooned tree.



LIFESTYLE



PHOTOS BY EO SUBA JR./AKRON BEACON JOURNAL

Lights twinkle at the home of Sara and Tony Biviano, left, in Green, Ohio. The couple set up the display, which is synchronized to music, to benefit the daughter of an Ohio woman who died of cancer this year. The Bivianos are also collecting for the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve's Toys for Tots program.



LET THERE BE LIGHTS

Ohio homeowners put on the Christmas glow to raise money for charity

By KIM HONE-McMAHAN
Akron Beacon Journal

For millions of Americans, watching National Lampoon's "Christmas Vacation" is a tradition at this time of year. Who can forget the Griswold home decorated with 25,000 bulbs? Or the eight tiny reindeer that Clark kicked to smithereens?

Maybe you've wondered what that house would look like if you saw it up close. If you can get to Ohio, this is your chance. Greg and Rachel Osterland have re-created the light display at their home in Wadsworth, complete with a trash pile and a charred Griswold chair.

During a recent evening, I drove to the Osterlands' home. And while I was looking at the road signs for direction, it wasn't necessary. I soon spotted a lovely, glowing cloud of LED lights that pointed me to 173 Duane Lane.

Greg learned to love Christmas lights growing up, when he and his family watched "Christmas Vacation" every Christmas Eve. It took him a few years to convince his wife to allow him to wrap the house in lights. The outcome is

absolutely glittering. The back of the two-story home is as decorated as the front. The Osterlands say visitors are welcome to walk behind their house, but watch for stinky land mines courtesy of two large pets.

The couple threw a party when the display was officially lit for the season. Family and friends came to the lighting dressed as

characters from the Chevy Chase hit. The lights will remain lit each day of the week from dusk to 11 p.m. during the Christmas season.

While sightseers are not invited inside their home, the couple permitted me indoors to take a peek.

In keeping with the Griswold theme, there's a decorated Christmas tree similar to that in the

movie. On the floor, they re-created the outline of an electrocuted cat — the fur of which came from a kitty owned by one of Rachel's family members.

The Osterlands are encouraging spectators to donate to charity, a practice that's becoming more popular. All contributions collected at their home will be given to the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation,

said Greg, who has the disease. Families who dress the kids in pajamas, turn on some Christmas music in the car and head out for an evening of looking at lights might feel the spectacle is well worth slipping a buck or two into a donation box.

In Green, Ohio, Tony and Sara Biviano have a light display synchronized to music that benefits young Ella, whose 32-year-old mother, Emily Joy Mitson-Lavy of Ohio's Jackson Township, died this year after a battle with leukemia.

Because the young mother spread such joy during her life, the Bivianos wanted to reflect that spirit in a light show.

"One of the earliest memories of Christmas was watching my dad climb high on the roof of our two-story colonial to decorate with strings of multifunction Christmas lights," said Tony Biviano. "I loved how the colors chased each other around, faded in and out, and twinkled. I was in awe. That began my love of decorating."

The Bivianos are also collecting for the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve's Toys for Tots program, which distributes toys to children whose parents cannot afford to buy gifts.



Greg and Rachel Osterland stand in front of their Wadsworth, Ohio, home, where they put up a light display to resemble the Griswold home in the National Lampoon film, "Christmas Vacation."

MUSIC

By RANDALL ROBERTS
Los Angeles Times

Those who have followed Nicki Minaj's often-thrilling ascent to hip-hop superstardom have been hoping for another straight-up rap album for years. After annihilating virtually all takers on mixtapes and guest verses starting in 2007, the 32-year-old began gunning for the pop charts, pouring forth two albums, "Pink Friday" (2010) and "Pink Friday: Roman Reloaded" (2012). Both often paired her charismatic wit and style with of-the-moment dance floor bangers and big-umbrella commercial sounds, along with a teasing dose of hard-edged hip-hop.

She's earned those hits, to the chagrin of some of her most devoted defenders — those who understand that when Minaj flips that switch and devotes herself to the art of the well-crafted hip-hop verse, uninterrupted electricity flows through her.

When she's on, her phrasing, her myriad personas, her playfully percussive vocal flow and the overall presentation combine to create as striking a presence as anyone who's ever rhymed along to beats. "The Pinkprint," released Monday, won't fully placate the hard-core rap heads, but it's got the bangs and the thrills many of us have hoped for, even if it's a slow build kind of power and slacks at times.

Minaj teased this new work with a promise that it would be hip-hop-centered, which had many of us slobbering and wondering about the possibilities — the could-be producers and collaborators, the themes, the approach. Would it be a concept album? A feast of tag-team verses? A confirmation that the "Pink Friday" pop stuff was a purse-fattening investment on future rap-feminist flawlessness?

Life, however, had other ideas, to the benefit of "The Pinkprint." Rather than fully keep her promise, the artist on "The Pinkprint" focuses on behind-the-curtain heartbreak ballads before moving into that unfiltered swagger. Enduring the end of a long-term love affair in her personal life, Minaj channels her emotions into as many slow-rolling explorations of love and regret as boasts about prowess, bank balance and flow.

She does so with help from prominent collaborators including label mates Drake and Lil Wayne, Meek Mill, Beyoncé, Ariana Grande and Chris Brown. Prominent producers such as Mike Will Made It, Dr. Luke, Hit-Boy and Alex Da Kid prove their status. The record's most striking and innovative track, "Four Door Aventura," glistens through the work of rising British beat-maker Parker Ighile.

Throughout "The Pinkprint," Minaj sounds equal parts wounded (opening "All Things Go," the slow-rolling rap track "The Crying Game") and relieved over the end of a once-overpowering affair. "If it was a record, it would have been classic," she raps on "I Lied," of the love and its unraveling. Elsewhere, she's a creative and sexual powerhouse. "Trini Dem Girls," a strange blend of reggaeton and hip-hop, is immediately memorable and featuring a breakout hook from a virtual unknown singer with the moniker Lunchmoney Lewis.

Minaj's wobbling hit "Anaconda" harnesses Sir Mix-a-Lot's ode to the outt, "Baby Got Back," for an update from Minaj's perspective. As she ver-

bally runs through a pair of male conquests, a "boy toy" named Troy used to live in Detroit" and "this dude named Michael used to ride motorcycles," she celebrates her booty bounty.

On her duet with pop star Grande, "Get on Your Knees," Minaj is a hardened lover uninterested in emotion, a relationship or anything other than pure submission. On the album's high point, "Feeling Myself," Minaj and Beyoncé collaborate on a self-love anthem that overflows with sexual, feminist and lyrical power.

"The Pinkprint" lags near the end, even if for resolution's sake these songs need to be there. The midtempo pop-rap track "Bed of Lies" features the increasingly overplayed queen of the hook, Skylar Grey, and a silly cliché as the focus; it's a sonic speed bump that diminishes otherwise hot Minaj rhymes.

The final song on the album (excluding the six bonus tracks on the deluxe version), "Grand Piano," is also the most bland. A weepy piano ballad, it strives to be the epic bookend but instead sounds like a subpar Celine Dion recording.

Those deluxe-version extras are tough to ignore, especially the set-closing "Truffle Butter" (featuring Drake and Lil Wayne), a beat-heavy house track that lives, like much of "The Pinkprint," in the thin green line separating art and entertainment.

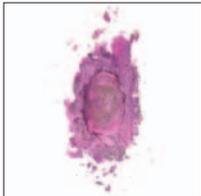
If the late-add dance track confuses things, it's hard to fault Minaj. Throughout "The Pinkprint," she's intent on channeling her talent to explore and document her many moods. The combination is often, if not always, intoxicating.

Unfiltered Swagger

Minaj explores her many moods on 'The Pinkprint'

Nicki Minaj

The Pinkprint
(Young Money/
Cash Money/Republic)



Hip-hop artist Nicki Minaj performs in New York in November 2013. Her new album, "The Pinkprint," debuted on Monday and features collaborations with Chris Brown, Drake and Ariana Grande.
INVISION/AP

CROSSWORD AND COMICS

NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

‘WELL, GOLLY!’

BY JIM PEREDO / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

- ACROSS**
- 1 Bed cover
 - 6 Flips
 - 12 Symbol in the logo of "The Big Bang Theory"
 - 16 ___ test
 - 19 Drops
 - 20 Title hunter of a 1922 film
 - 21 "___ chance!"
 - 22 It may be beaten, with "the"
 - 23 Religious rituals for cats?
 - 25 Web browsers
 - 27 "Off the hook"
 - 28 Cookware brand
 - 29 Tofurky, to turkey, e.g.
 - 30 Nagging question?
 - 32 Demanding sort
 - 35 Having left the company, maybe
 - 36 Seeds
 - 40 "Let's Be Cops" org.
 - 42 Master of Japanese writing?
 - 47 Sound before a big blow?
 - 49 Orbit offering
 - 51 Poet who wrote "Let us not speak of them, but look, and pass on"
 - 52 Strange pond scum?
 - 54 Ingredient in some London pies
 - 55 Jim of children's TV
 - 56 Shred
 - 57 "Zounds!"
 - 59 Swear
 - 61 Day care attendee
 - 62 The tiniest amount
 - 64 Never. Ger.
 - 65 "Gilgamesh," e.g.
 - 66 Turns down
 - 67 "Grant your own damn wishes," e.g.?
 - 71 "Do the Right Thing" pizzeria
 - 73 Fire proof?
 - 74 Part of E.U.: Abbr.
 - 75 Former auto exec Lee
 - 78 Way of the East
 - 79 Former White House press secretary Perino
 - 80 Cop (to)
 - 82 Markdown marker
 - 83 Futilely
 - 85 Born abroad?
 - 87 "How deep is your love?" or "You should be dancing"?
 - 89 Abnormal swelling
 - 90 Olive Garden starter
 - 92 Full complement for a Quidditch team
 - 93 Comment from a driver who finally reached his destination?
 - 95 Jog
 - 97 Stop what you're doing
 - 98 Goggle
 - 99 ___ bean
 - 101 Per
 - 103 Arsenal workers
 - 107 Viet ___
 - 109 Close friend, slangily
 - 114 Discusses at length
 - 115 Surprised comment upon rummaging through a tea chest?
 - 117 Cause of wear and tear
 - 118 Chef Paula
 - 119 See 80/Down
 - 120 Calisthenic of "Star Wars"
 - 121 "Just ___"
 - 122 Start to go down the drain
 - 123 Literary prefaces
 - 124 Convinces
 - DOWN**
 - 1 Delin in the Edda
 - 2 "Sure, put me down for that"
 - 3 Cavils
 - 4 James of jazz
 - 5 "God Must Have Spent a Little More 'Time on You" group
 - 6 College for a Brit
 - 7 "Tennessee Waltz" singer
 - 8 Sufficient, informally
 - 9 Santa Claus-tracking org.
 - 10 Descriptive of dingos and jackals
 - 11 Blue expense
 - 12 Actress Paquin
 - 13 It might be clipped and filed
 - 14 Capital on a river of the same name
 - 15 Like early Sears business
 - 16 Leftover bit
 - 17 When doubled, part of many a Robin Williams tribute
 - 18 Abbey area
 - 24 Faithful, in old poetry
 - 26 Korda who directed "Sahara"
 - 31 Chemical compound often labeled "S"
 - 33 Bam attachments
 - 34 Pot money
 - 36 Took care of
 - 37 Blue expense
 - 38 Some queently attive
 - 39 Fighter pilots fly them
 - 41 Friday night series?
 - 43 Veracruz's capital
 - 44 Not learned
 - 45 Keep a low profile?
 - 46 Circus sights
 - 48 Classic theater
 - 50 Play again
 - 53 Mosaicist or glassblower
 - 55 About 2 1/2 acres
 - 58 Made a false move?
 - 60 End of a famous boat
 - 63 "___ Flux," 2005 sci-fi film
 - 65 Most chill-inducing
 - 66 Many a bored student
 - 68 Actress Woodward
 - 69 Relative of the cha-cha
 - 70 Brain-freeze drinks
 - 71 Larsson who wrote "The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo"
 - 72 U.S.'s first grocery chain
 - 76 University of Miami athletes, for short
 - 77 Means
 - 79 Transportation service for the disabled
 - 80 Alphabetical
 - 81 Any four-letter word
 - 84 Pals
 - 86 Diet, info
 - 88 Hair gel, e.g.
 - 90 Sidestepped
 - 91 Ending with cow or hole
 - 94 Warmed up the crowd (for)
 - 96 "___ honest ..."
 - 100 "Heaven forbid!"
 - 102 Strips
 - 103 Rarely in un deserto
 - 104 One of the friends on "Friends"
 - 105 Deferral
 - 106 Electronics giant
 - 108 ___ the Great of children's lit
 - 110 Picnic side dish
 - 111 Brown who founded The Daily Beast
 - 112 Annual "500"
 - 113 Vanity cases?
 - 115 Antithesis: Abbr.
 - 116 Attorneys' degs.

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GUNSTON STREET



"Gunston Street" is drawn by Basil Zaviscki. Email him at gunstonstreet@yahoo.com, and visit gunstonstreet.com.

RESULTS FOR ABOVE PUZZLE

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KNOWLEDGE

ARCHIVE PHOTO OF THE DAY

STRIPES CENTRAL

IS POWER.

Stripes BLOGS

Get your fair share from our award-winning journalists at Stripes.com/blogs.

PACIFIC SPORTSBLOG

PACIFIC STORM TRACKER

OMBUDSMAN

GADGETS & CHARTS



COURTESY OF AUCTIONSBYCELLULAR/TNS

Jim Alvarez is the founder and CEO of AuctionsByCellular, which allows companies to conduct charitable auctions via smartphones.

The business of online giving

By JOHN CARPENTER
Chicago Tribune

At her 2013 gala fund-raising event, which included a silent auction, Jayne Drew noticed people checking their phones as they sat down to dinner.

Rudeness? Certainly not to Drew, who couldn't have been happier. "They were getting alerts that they'd been outbid, and entering new bids," said Drew, development director for Gigi's Playhouse, a Hoffman Estates-based organization that supports educational programs for people with Down syndrome.

Gigi's Playhouse is a client of AuctionsByCellular, a startup that's working in the emerging space of online philanthropy.

Startups such as GiveCentral, Zealous Good and GiveForward are among other companies that are innovating the way in which people give. That's happening as charitable giving, particularly online giving, continues to grow and as more givers are making their contributions on mobile devices.

Launched in 2011, AuctionsByCellular won a Chicago Inno-

vation Award this year, and it has helped raise more than \$140 million for nonprofit causes, CEO and founder Jim Alvarez said.

Attendees at a charity event using the system get a text message after they sign in. That leads them to their personal bidding page, loaded with items for sale. They also receive instant notifications when they've been outbid, and they can place a new bid directly from their phone.

Drew said she considers this the key to boosting donations for her organization.

"In the past people would make a bid, then move on," she said. "Unless you really competed for one particular item, you kind of forgot about it."

Steve MacLaughlin, director of product management for Blackboard, a South Carolina-based fundraising consultant, said online giving remains a small percentage of overall donations — about 10 percent — but that it's growing quickly. Charitable giving over the past 12 months was up by about 4 percent, but online grew at almost 13 percent, he said. MacLaughlin attributed the surge primarily to the growing use of mobile devices.

GADGET WATCH

Digital photo management app does it all

By GREGG ELLMAN
Tribune News Services

Mylio, a digital photo management software, got its name from "My Life Organized," according to Kevin Gilbert, memory evangelist for the company.

During a phone call he also pointed out that the company recently had a study done and found that 1.3 trillion digital photos will be taken worldwide in 2015.

With that in mind, Gilbert said the premise of gathering, saving, protecting and showing digital images helped create Mylio.

After using the software, I can attest that Mylio does it all.

The system syncs your digital photo library across all your devices (iPhone, iPad, desktop PC or a Mac) with ease, literally in seconds. Android users should have a version in spring 2015.

After a simple setup, I had a folder of 181 imported images on my Mac desktop, and almost instantly they appeared on my iPhone. I then put the app on my iPad, and the photos appeared in seconds.

The interface is user friendly, with tabs along the side for importing, viewing folders or settings, for example.

With the click of a button you can have your images play in a slideshow, or just organize them in any way you want. Images in Mylio can be shared on Facebook and other social media platforms, or you can do the reverse and import photos you have stored on Facebook, Flickr and iPhoto.

There are also editing tools to make changes on each image for exposure, contrast, highlights and shadows.

A great feature lets you organize your photos by dates, people you were with or the location they were taken. Once you make any changes, they are synced with all your other devices using Mylio.

If you have any experience with digital photography applications, you're going to find the interface very easy to use.

Newcomers to digital photography can start by having all their 2014 holiday photos organized in seconds. Just by watching the included setup video, they'll feel like they've been using the software for years. It's that easy and intuitive.

If you are sharing photos on multiple devices, the sync panel lets you choose to have an original full resolution file, a smaller editable preview file, a thumbnail on each device. This way, if one of your devices does not have enough

room for the original files, you can still see a small preview.

The default settings keep the original files on your computer and thumbnails on each device. But the previews are editable lmb files (including raw files), which you can tone and adjust to your liking.

When you go back to the original files, all the adjustments you made are there. If you don't like what you did, you can reset the files to the original content.

Mylio offers a free trial. After you get hooked, annual subscriptions are available in packages of \$100 for 100,000 images up to \$250 for 500,000 images. Each level also adds many other features.

Online: mylio.com



Mylio syncs your digital photos across all your devices.

The Chargedock 2000 is a winner for 2015.

It's a combination portable charging battery built as a desktop dock with an Apple Lightning connection. Just flip open the lid and dock your phone for a charge, even with most cases on.

The device comes with a microUSB cable for charging the dock itself and an LED indicator shows you how much battery power is left in the 2000mAh lithium polymer battery.

Online: Venteum.com; \$39.99

The Twelve South HiRise Deluxe for iPhone and iPad is a desktop dock worth considering. The company refers to its product as "the ultimate pedestal for iPhone and iPad."

Its metal design is eye-catching, and works as a perfect desktop companion for hands-free use and direct USB charging.

Rubber padding on the bottom ensures that the device stays put. Both Lightning and microUSB cables are included.

Twelve South also has introduced the ultra-thin SurfacePad cases for iPhone 6 (\$39.99; 6 Plus \$49.99).

They are made with premium-quality soft leather and designed to protect the iPhone and double as a hands-free stand. Inside the front cover are slots to hold ID or business cards.

Online: twelvesouth.com

The HiRise Deluxe for iPhone and iPad is a perfect desktop companion for hands-free use and direct USB charging.



TNS photos

ITUNES MUSIC

Top 10 songs on the iTunes Store for Dec. 17:

- "Blank Space," Taylor Swift
- "Take Me to Church," Hozier
- "Uptown Funk [feat. Bruno Mars]," Mark Ronson
- "Thinking Out Loud," Ed Sheeran
- "Lips Are Movin'," Meghan Trainor
- "The Hanging Tree," James Newton Howard
- "Shake It Off," Taylor Swift
- "I'm Not the Only One," Sam Smith
- "The Heart Wants What It Wants," Selena Gomez
- "All About That Bass," Meghan Trainor

— Compiled by TNS

SPOTIFY MUSIC

The most streamed tracks on Spotify for Dec. 8-14:

- "Take Me To Church," Hozier
- "Thinking Out Loud," Ed Sheeran
- "Uptown Funk," Mark Ronson
- "Love Me Harder," Ariana Grande
- "I'm Not the Only One," Sam Smith
- "I Don't — With You," Big Sean
- "Jealous," Nick Jonas
- "The Heart Wants What It Wants," Selena Gomez
- "Stay With Me," Sam Smith
- "Lips Are Movin'," Meghan Trainor

— Compiled by TNS

ITUNES MOVIES

Top 10 movies downloaded from the iTunes Store for Dec. 17:

- "The Equalizer"
- "Expelled"
- "The Maze Runner"
- "Guardians of the Galaxy"
- "This Is Where I Leave You"
- "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles"
- "The Captive"
- "A Walk Among the Tombstones"
- "EIP"
- "Down of the Planet of the Apes"

— Compiled by TNS

VIDEO GAMES

Game Informer rank the Top 10 downloadable games for December:

- "Hearthstone: Gobblins vs. Gnomes," PC, iOS
- "Game of Thrones Episode One — Iron from Ice," PS4, Xbox One, PS3, 360, PC, iOS
- "Talos Principle" PC
- "Kingdom Rush: Origins," iOS
- "This War of Mine," PC
- "Geometry Wars 3: Dimensions," PS4, Xbox One, PS3, 360, PC
- "Terra Battle," iOS
- "Legend of Grimrock II," PC
- "Lara Croft and the Temple of Osiris," Xbox One, PC
- "Lumino City," PC

— Compiled by TNS

APPS

Top 5 new paid apps for Dec. 17:

- ANDROID
- SimplePlans
 - Kingdom Rush Origins
 - Game of Thrones
 - Pumped BMK 2
 - Oddworld: Stranger's Wrath

Top 5 paid apps for Dec. 17:

- APPLE
- Heads Up!
 - Minecraft — Pocket Edition
 - Five Nights at Freddy's 2
 - Lara Croft and the Temple of Osiris
 - Five Nights at Freddy's

— Compiled by TNS

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BUSINESS/WEATHER

Flaws allow cellular eavesdropping

By FRANK JORDAN
The Associated Press

BERLIN — Security flaws in a system used by cellphone carriers around the world could open the door to wide-ranging surveillance of mobile phone traffic, according to a German researcher who discovered the problem.

The issue affects a telecommunications standard called Signaling System 7, or SS7, which is used by carriers to manage connections between cellular networks. The Berlin-based Security Research Lab, which discovered the problem in August, said a skilled person could exploit the flaws to eavesdrop on the phone calls, text messages and data traffic of billions of people.

"Given how valuable such spying capabilities are to states and other criminal actors, I would be very surprised if we are first to find these hacking vectors," said researcher Karsten Nohl said Friday.

Nohl said cellphone com-



MARI LENNHAN/AP

German carriers T-Mobile and Vodafone Deutschland say they have taken measures to protect customers after a researcher discovered security flaws that could leave users open to eavesdroppers.

panies were quietly told about the problem earlier this month. The Washington Post and Germany's Sueddeutsche Zeitung newspaper reported on it Thursday.

At least two German cellular

companies, T-Mobile and Vodafone Deutschland, said they have taken measures to prevent criminals and spies from exploiting the flaws to eavesdrop on customers.

A spokeswoman for GSMA said

the reported problem affects 2G and 3G networks, but not the newest 4G standard.

Nohl noted that carriers can easily close the security hole by blocking certain network requests submitted over SS7 — a three-decade-old system — by other companies.

Users can protect themselves independently of their cellphone carriers by using applications that encrypt their calls, messages and emails, Nohl said.

MARKET WATCH

Dec. 19, 2014

Dow Jones industrials	26.65
	17,804.80
Nasdaq composite	16.98
	4,765.38
Standard & Poor's 500	9.42
	2,070.65
Russell 2000	3.80
	1,195.96

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs (Dec. 22)	\$1.2601
Dollar buys (Dec. 22)	€0.7936
British pound (Dec. 22)	\$1.61
Japanese yen (Dec. 22)	¥116.00
South Korean won (Dec. 22)	₩1,073.00
Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3770
British pound	\$1.5636/6,936
Canada (dollar)	1.1597
China (Yuan)	6.2193
Denmark (Krone)	6.8582
Egypt (Pound)	7.1480
Euro	\$1.2225/8,141
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7539
Hungary (Forint)	257.84
Israel (Shekel)	3.9282
Japan (Yen)	119.51
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.2929
Norway (Krone)	7.2724
Philippines (Peso)	44.77
Poland (Zloty)	3.49
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7538
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3145
South Korea (Won)	1,099.84
Switzerland (Franc)	0.9842
Thailand (Baht)	32.88
Turkey (Lira)	0.3005

(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one pound, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	3.25
Discount rate	4.75
Federal funds market rate	0.13
3-month bill	0.04
30-year bond	2.75

WEATHER OUTLOOK



The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

Sunday's US temperatures

City	Hi	Lo	Wthr	Chatanooga	52	41	Cldy	Fort Wayne	37	30	Cldy	Louisville	47	35	PCldy	Pocatello	52	35	Rain	Sioux City	40	35	Cldy
Ablene, Tex	62	44	Cldy	Cheyenne	47	30	Cir	Goodland	58	50	Cldy	Lubbock	61	38	PCldy	Portland, Maine	34	25	Cldy	Sioux Falls	35	31	Cldy
Akron, Ohio	36	28	Cldy	Chicago	40	31	Cldy	Grand Junction	51	28	PCldy	Macon	54	46	Cldy	Portland, Ore.	54	43	Rain	South Bend	38	31	Cldy
Albuquerque	58	23	Cldy	Cleveland	41	32	Cldy	Grand Rapids	38	30	Cldy	Miami Beach	37	31	Cldy	Providence	36	30	Snow	Spokane	47	34	Cldy
Allentown, Pa.	49	32	Cldy	Colorado Springs	53	33	Cldy	Great Falls	46	33	Cldy	Memphis	54	43	PCldy	Raleigh-Durham	51	38	PCldy	Springfield, Ill.	42	32	Cldy
Anchorage	27	15	Cldy	Columbia, S.C.	54	43	Cldy	Green Bay	35	32	Rain	Miami Beach	78	69	PCldy	Reno	56	36	Rain	Tallahassee	60	56	Rain
Ashville	44	36	Cldy	Columbus, Ga.	55	46	Cldy	Hartford	41	26	PCldy	Milwaukee	39	31	Cldy	Richmond	48	32	PCldy	Tampa	76	65	Cldy
Atlanta	52	43	Cldy	Concord, N.H.	33	24	Cldy	Harrisburg	37	28	Cldy	Ms-St Paul	37	34	Cldy	Roanoke	46	33	PCldy	Toledo	47	28	Cldy
Atlantic City	43	26	Cldy	Cornhusker, Neb.	63	52	Cldy	Helena	44	32	Rain	Missoula	39	30	Rain	Rochester	34	28	Cldy	Topeka	45	41	Rain
Austin	60	29	Snow	Dallas-Ft Worth	55	46	Cldy	Honolulu	83	70	PCldy	Monterey	53	43	Cldy	Rockford	39	39	Cldy	Tucson	65	42	PCldy
Baltimore	44	31	PCldy	Dayton	39	30	Cldy	Houston	60	48	Cldy	Montgomery	58	49	Cldy	Sacramento	63	50	Cldy	Tulsa	55	44	PCldy
Baton Rouge	63	48	Cldy	Denver	74	64	Cldy	Huntsville	52	43	Rain	Nashville	52	41	PCldy	St. Louis	48	35	Cldy	Tupelo	55	42	PCldy
Bilings	50	31	Cir	Denver	54	31	PCldy	Indianapolis	39	31	Cldy	New Orleans	62	53	Cldy	St. Petersburg	74	64	Cldy	Waco	57	47	Cldy
Birmingham	56	47	Cldy	Des Moines	44	38	Cldy	Jackson, Miss.	59	43	PCldy	New York City	41	31	Cldy	St. Thomas	86	75	Rain	Washington	46	32	PCldy
Bismarck	55	25	PCldy	Detroit	37	30	Cldy	Jacksonville	65	58	Cldy	Newark	47	31	Cldy	Salem, Ore.	57	45	Rain	W. Palm Beach	78	69	Cldy
Boise	52	40	Rain	Duluth	32	30	Cldy	Juneau	37	34	Rain	Norfolk, Va.	42	36	PCldy	Salt Lake City	52	42	Cldy	Wichita	47	39	Rain
Boston	36	31	Snow	El Paso	60	38	PCldy	Kansas City	45	41	Rain	North Platte	47	26	Cldy	San Angelo	66	44	PCldy	Wichita Falls	56	41	Rain
Bridgeport	40	29	Snow	Elkins	40	26	Cldy	Key West	72	61	Cldy	Oklahoma City	52	40	Rain	San Antonio	61	50	Cldy	Wilkes-Barre	37	24	Cldy
Brownsville	66	55	Cldy	Erie	37	30	Cldy	Knoxville	51	38	Cldy	Omaha	43	36	Rain	San Diego	69	55	PCldy	Wilmington, Del.	42	29	Cldy
Buffalo	34	28	Cldy	Eugene	58	47	Cldy	Lake Charles	62	49	Cldy	Orlando	77	64	Cldy	San Francisco	63	55	Cldy	Youngstown	49	36	Cldy
Burlington, Vt.	28	26	Cldy	Evansville	46	34	PCldy	Lansing	36	29	Cldy	Paducah	48	36	PCldy	San Jose	64	51	Cldy				
Caribou, Maine	22	11	Snow	Fairbanks	3	-4	Snow	Las Vegas	62	47	PCldy	Piedmont	56	44	Rain	Santa Fe	44	27	Cldy				
Casper, Wyo.	42	26	Cir	Fargo	35	27	Cldy	Lexington	45	33	PCldy	Pesha	42	31	Cldy	St. Marie	30	27	Cldy				
Charleston, S.C.	55	49	Rain	Flagstaff	49	26	PCldy	Lincoln	44	35	Cldy	Philadelphia	42	31	Cldy	Savannah	57	52	Rain				
Charleston, W.Va.	46	32	Cldy	Flint	38	28	Cldy	Little Rock	51	41	Cldy	Phoenix	67	48	Cir	Seattle	55	47	Rain				
Charlotte, N.C.	48	39	Cldy	Fort Smith	52	40	Cldy	Los Angeles	71	53	Cir	Pittsburgh	37	28	Cldy	Shreveport	57	43	Cldy				

National temperature extremes
Hi: Ft. 79, Fort Lauderdale Fla.
Lo: Ft. 1, -6, Reno, Mich.

MLB/SPORTS BRIEFS

Things to know

Padres, Dodgers get biggest makeovers

The Associated Press

There was a flurry of news around Major League Baseball on Friday as teams worked to retool before the holiday break. Here are some things to know about all the player moves and other changes:

San Diego Padres: New general manager A.J. Preller and the Padres were in the middle of all the action. They took a break Friday from a dizzying series of blockbuster trades to introduce one of their new sluggers, Matt Kemp.

"This is unbelievable. He's a GM rock star right now, moving in and out and doing so many things," Kemp said at a Petco Park news conference. "Every day there's something different."

In just more than a week, Preller has worked a five-player deal with the division rival Los Angeles Dodgers to get Kemp; an 11-player deal with Tampa Bay and Washington to get outfielder Wil Myers, the 2013 AL Rookie of the Year with the Rays; a six-player deal with Atlanta for slugger Justin Upton; a four-player trade with Oakland that landed All-Star catcher Derek Norris; and a straight-up trade with Boston to get third baseman Will Middlebrooks for catcher Ryan Hanigan, who came over from Tampa Bay.

Trade deals: Los Angeles finalized its trade for All-Star shortstop Jimmy Rollins, sending right-hander Zach Eflin and left-hander Tim Lincecum to the Phillies for Rollins and \$11 million to cover part of his \$11 million salary in 2015.

The Dodgers had to wait to unveil their acquisition until Kemp's trade to the Padres was finished Thursday.

In a 14-year tenure in Philadelphia, the 36-year-old Rollins agreed to waive his no-trade clause. He said the Dodgers were his top trade destination.

"I don't feel I have to re-prove myself at all," Rollins said. "It's sort of a fresh start. It's hard to (get) a fresh start going into your 15th season."

Los Angeles also introduced new second baseman Howie Kendrick, putting a blue cap on the longtime Angels infielder Kendrick is just one element of a thorough make-



GEORGY BULL/AP

San Diego Padres outfielder Matt Kemp gestures as he tries on his new uniform during a news conference Friday in San Diego.

over for the NL West champions under new top executive Andrew Friedman.

Since Friedman took over from Ned Colletti, Los Angeles has parted ways with Kemp, Dee Gordon, Hanley Ramirez, Dan Haren and Brian Wilson. The Dodgers have acquired Kendrick, Rollins, catcher Yasmani Grandal and Brandon McCarthy in their place, stabilizing their defense and addressing several possible problem areas from the plate to the clubhouse.

Yankees-Marlins trade: The New York Yankees made a five-player swap that helped their rotation get younger and healthier, acquiring right-hander Nathan Eovaldi from the Marlins for versatile Martin Prado and righty David Phelps.

The Yankees also received first baseman-outfielder Garrett Jones and minor league pitcher Domingo German from

Miami. Eovaldi, who turns 25 in February, throws up to 98 mph and was 6-14 with a 4.37 ERA in 199 2/3 innings last season. He helps shore up a rotation that includes Masahiro Tanaka (torn elbow ligament), CC Sabathia (knee surgery) and Michael Pineda (shoulder muscle), all pitchers who lost time to injuries last season.

Prado, 31, was obtained by the Yankees from Arizona at the July 31 trade deadline and hit .316 with seven homers and 16 RBIs in 133 at-bats for New York. An All-Star in 2010, he plays second, third and the outfield.

The Yankees also acquired right-handed reliever Gonzalez German from the Mets for cash.

Jake Peavy: After reviving his career in San Francisco, the 33-year-old righty is returning to the World Series champions.

Peavy agreed to a \$24 million, two-year contract with the Giants, two people familiar with the deal told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

San Francisco also found a replacement for departed third baseman Pablo Sandoval, obtaining Casey McGehee from Miami for minor league right-handers Kendry Flores and Luis Castillo.

McGehee became expendable once the Marlins acquired Prado from the Yankees.

Signed: Alex Rios signed an \$11 million, one-year deal with the Royals that includes a mutual option for the 2016 season. Rios will take over in right field for Nori Aoki, who departed in free agency. ... First baseman Corey Hart and the Pirates agreed to a \$2.5 million, one-year contract. The deal, which includes \$2.5 million in performance bonuses, gives Pittsburgh a right-handed option at first base to join left-handed slugger Pedro Alvarez, who is moving from third to first. ... Reliever Jason Motte and the Chicago Cubs finalized a \$4.5 million, one-year contract that allows the former St. Louis closer to earn \$2.5 million more in performance bonuses. ... David Ross and the Chicago Cubs agreed on a two-year contract worth \$5 million, reuniting the catcher with frequent batterymate Jon Lester. ... Left-handed reliever Wesley Wright and the Baltimore Orioles completed a \$1.7 million, one-year contract.

Royals-Angels swap: After trading away Kendrick, the Los Angeles Angels acquired second baseman Johnny Gantavola from Kansas City for minor league pitcher Brian Broderick.

Luxury tax: The Dodgers have taken over as MLB's biggest spenders, a distinction held by the Yankees for the previous 15 years.

That spot at the top comes with a price: Los Angeles owes more than \$26.6 million in luxury tax.

The Dodgers finished with a record payroll of \$257,283,410, according to final calculations made by MLB and obtained by the AP. That's more than \$20 million over the previous high set by the Yankees last year.

Briefly

Vonn wins downhill in Val d'Isere

The Associated Press

VAL D'ISERE, France—American skier Lindsey Vonn won a World Cup downhill race Saturday on the same course where she re-injured her troublesome right knee one year ago, clinching a 61st career victory to continue her strong comeback following two operations.

Vonn had a clean run on the Oreiller-Killy course to finish 0.19 seconds ahead of early pace-setter Elisabeth Georgl of Austria and Viktoria Rebensburg of Germany, who tied for second.

Swiss skier Lara Gut placed 0.39 seconds behind in fourth place, while overall leader Tina Maze of Slovenia finished half a second adrift in seventh.

After nearly two years without a victory, the 30-year-old Vonn won a downhill at Lake Louise, Canada, two weeks ago and finished second in super-G the next day.

She goes for a fourth straight podium in Sunday's super-G.

In other skiing news:

■ Olympic champion Kjetil Jansrud won his overall World Cup lead by winning a super-G by a comfortable margin Saturday at Val Gardena, Italy.

The Norwegian clocked 1 minute, 33.87 seconds for his fourth win of the season.

Local favorite Dominik Paris of Italy finished second, 0.46 seconds behind and Hannes Reichelt of Austria was third, 0.54 back.

■ American racer Steven Nyman showed off his complete mastery of the Saslong course by winning a World Cup downhill at the classic venue of Val Gardena, Italy, on Friday for the third time.

The only skier who came even close to challenging him was Kjetil Jansrud of Norway, who won the opening two downhills this season. He finished 0.31 seconds behind in the run of nearly two minutes, while Dominik Paris of Italy was third, 1.15 back.

Vols F McGhee out 6-8 weeks

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. — Tennessee forward Jabari McGhee is expected to miss at least six to eight weeks after surgery on his right foot.

McGhee, a 6-foot-8 freshman, was injured Wednesday in an 83-72 loss at North Carolina State. Coach Donnie Tyndall announced the severity of the injury Friday after a 61-58 victory over Tennessee Tech. McGhee is averaging 4.4 points, 3.8 rebounds and 12.9 minutes per game.

Jackets' Jenner out 1-2 months

COLUMBUS, Ohio — The injury-riddled Columbus Blue Jackets will be without forward Boone Jenner for one to two months because of a stress fracture in his back.

The club placed Jenner on injured reserve Saturday. Jenner had six goals and six assists in 20 games.



GIOVANNI AULETTA/AP

Lindsey Vonn hugs a staff Saturday as she celebrates winning a women's World Cup downhill in Val d'Isere, France.

NHL



PAUL SANCTA/AP

Detroit center Pavel Datsyuk, left, skates around New York Islanders goalie Jaroslav Halak during the second period of Friday's game in Detroit. New York won the game 2-1.

Roundup

Lee's 'garbage goal' lifts Islanders over Red Wings

The Associated Press

DETROIT — Anders Lee called it a "garbage" goal.

The New York Islanders will take it — along with yet another victory at Detroit. Lee knocked the puck over the goal line for a split-second in the second period, and the Islanders went on to a 2-1 victory over the Red Wings on Friday night. Detroit has now lost its last five home games against the Islanders — the Red Wings haven't beaten New York at Joe Louis Arena since 2003.

Lee was credited with the tiebreaking goal after a replay review. Brock Nelson took the puck from Detroit's Riley Sheahan and nearly slipped it past goalie Petr Mrazek, but it sat next to the right post before Lee arrived and hacked at it. At first, it wasn't clear if the puck went in, but a replay showed it barely crossing the line before Detroit defenseman Jonathan Ericsson cleared it out.

"Brock made a great play, stripping the puck from his guy," Lee said. "He got it most of the way, except for the last six inches. A garbage goal."

Nelson was credited with an assist on that goal, and he also scored in the first period. Henrik Zetterberg scored for the Red Wings.

The Islanders trail Pittsburgh by two points for the best record in the Eastern Conference.

"I thought it was a pretty high-level hockey game," Detroit coach Mike Babcock said. "I was impressed with their team, but I was impressed with lots of things we did too."

Senators 6, Ducks 2: Mike Hoffman scored two goals and Erik Karlsson had two assists as host Ottawa beat Anaheim.

Kyle Turris added a goal and an assist, and Milan Michalek, Mark Stone and Mika Zibanejad also tallied for the Senators (14-12-6). Ottawa won back-to-back games for the first time since early November. Craig Anderson made 32 saves to record his second straight win. The Ducks (22-8-5) got two goals from Ryan Getz-

laf 2 minutes, 33 seconds apart over the second and third periods.

Jets 2, Bruins 1: Michael Hutchinson made 30 saves and Mathieu Perreault broke a tie with 23 seconds left in the second period in host Winnipeg's victory over Boston.

Evander Kane also scored for Winnipeg. Defenseman Jay Harrison, acquired by the Jets in a trade with Carolina on Thursday, had an assist on his first shift.

Tuukka Rask made 25 saves for the Bruins, and Torey Krug had Boston's goal.

Devils 3, Lightning 2 (SO): Patrik Elias scored the only goal of the shootout to give goaltender Keith Kinkaid his first NHL win, and host New Jersey snapped a five-game skid with a victory over Tampa Bay.

Kinkaid stopped shootout attempts by Steven Stamkos, Nikita Kucherov and Jonathan Drouin and made 26 saves in the game.

Adam Henrique and Elias scored for New Jersey, which won for only the third time in 14 games (3-7-4).

Stamkos and Kucherov tallied for the Lightning, who lost for the fifth time in seven games. Kucherov scored with 40.1 seconds left in regulation to tie it.

Stars 2, Flames 1: Jamie Benn had a goal and an assist as visiting Dallas handed Calgary its seventh straight loss.

Trevor Daley also scored for the Stars, and Kari Lehtonen made 21 saves.

Tyler Seguin had an assist to take over the NHL scoring lead with 39 points (23 goals, 16 assists). He is one point ahead of Evgeni Malkin and Jakob Voracek.

Mark Giordano scored for Calgary (17-15-2), which has lost seven consecutive games for the first time since its team-record 11-game skid in 1985-86. Jonas Hiller stopped 19 shots. Dallas has won three in a row.

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division									
Team	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA	Diff	Record
Tampa Bay	34	20	10	4	44	112	90	+22	10-2-0
Montreal	33	20	11	2	42	88	82	+6	10-2-0
Detroit	33	17	8	8	42	83	82	+1	9-9-5
Toronto	32	19	10	3	41	110	91	+19	9-9-5
Florida	30	19	10	1	39	103	87	+16	9-9-2
Boston	33	16	14	3	35	82	85	-3	8-10-5
Ottawa	32	14	12	6	34	88	88	0	8-10-5
Buffalo	32	11	17	4	28	82	100	-18	6-12-5

Metropolitan Division									
Team	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA	Diff	Record
Pittsburgh	34	22	8	4	46	99	71	+28	11-2-1
N.Y. Islanders	32	22	10	0	44	101	90	+11	11-2-1
Washington	31	19	10	2	40	91	85	+6	10-2-1
N.Y. Rangers	29	15	10	4	34	89	89	0	9-9-2
New Jersey	34	12	16	6	30	77	98	-21	6-12-5
Columbus	31	13	15	3	29	76	100	-24	6-12-5
Philadelphia	31	11	14	6	28	81	92	-11	6-12-5
Carolina	31	9	19	3	21	66	88	-22	5-13-2

Western Conference

Central Division									
Team	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA	Diff	Record
Chicago	32	22	9	1	45	100	64	+36	11-2-1
St. Louis	32	21	9	2	44	98	78	+20	11-2-1
Nashville	30	17	10	2	42	81	59	+22	10-2-1
Winnipeg	33	17	10	6	40	80	82	-2	10-2-1
Minnesota	30	16	10	4	38	89	79	+10	9-9-2
Dallas	31	13	13	5	31	89	104	-15	7-12-5
Colorado	31	10	13	8	28	82	100	-18	6-12-5

Pacific Division									
Team	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA	Diff	Record
Anaheim	32	22	8	2	46	91	96	-5	11-2-1
San Jose	33	18	11	4	40	94	85	+9	10-2-1
Vancouver	31	18	11	2	38	80	82	-2	10-2-1
Los Angeles	33	16	11	6	38	90	80	+10	10-2-1
Calgary	34	17	15	2	36	98	92	+6	9-9-5
Arizona	31	11	16	4	26	72	100	-28	6-12-5
Edmonton	33	7	20	6	20	69	110	-41	4-13-2

Note: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss.

Tuesday's games
Florida 2, Philadelphia 1; SO
Pittsburgh 1, Colorado 0, OT
Carolina 4, Toronto 1
Washington 5, Columbus 4, OT
Anaheim 2, Montreal 1
Los Angeles 6, St. Louis 4
San Jose 4, Edmonton 3

Friday's games
New Jersey 2, Tampa Bay 2, SO
Ottawa 6, Anaheim 2
N.Y. Islanders 2, Detroit 1
Winnipeg 2, Boston 1
Dallas 2, Calgary 1

Saturday's games
Arizona at Los Angeles
Colorado at Buffalo
Philadelphia at Toronto
Ottawa at Montreal
Washington at New Jersey
Tampa Bay at N.Y. Islanders
Florida at Pittsburgh
N.Y. Rangers at Carolina
Chicago at Columbus
Nashville at Minnesota
Calgary at Vancouver
St. Louis at San Jose

Sunday's games
Colorado at Detroit
Dallas at Edmonton
Buffalo at Colorado
Carolina at N.Y. Rangers
Toronto at Chicago
Philadelphia at Winnipeg

Friday Stars 2, Flames 1
Dallas 0 2 0-2
Colorado 0 1 0-1
Second Period—1, Dallas, Ja.Benn 9 (Seguin, Egkin), 4:02, 2, Dallas, Daley 7 (Ja.Benn, Egkin), 11:54, 3, Calgary, Giordano 9, 18:46.

Shots on Goal—Dallas 6-8-7-21, Calgary 9-8-5-22.
Power-play opportunities—Dallas of 1, Calgary 0 of 4.
Lehtonen 13-7-5 (22 shots-21 saves), **Calgary** Hiller 9-10-1 (21-15).

A-19,289, (19,289), T-2:26.

Devils 3, Lightning 2 (SO)
Tampa Bay 0 1 1 0-2
New Jersey 1 0 0-1
First Period—1, New Jersey, Henrique 9 (Goreau, Gomez, 2:01), 1:23, 2, New Jersey, Elias 8 (Havlat, Henrique), 15:17.
Second Period—1, Tampa Bay, Stamkos 19 (Callahan, Drouin), 14:55.
Third Period—4, Tampa Bay, Kucherov 13 (Callahan, Drouin), 14:55.
Shootout—Tampa Bay 0 (Stamkos NG, Kucherov NG, Drouin NG), New Jersey 1 (Gomez NG, Tzajac NG, Elias G).

Shots on Goal—Tampa Bay 6-12-8-2-28, New Jersey 16-4-2-1 of 3.
Power-play opportunities—Tampa Bay 0 of 5, New Jersey 16-4-2-1 of 3.
Goals—Tampa Bay, Nabokov 3-4-2 (19 shots-16 saves), New Jersey, Kinkaid 1-1-2 (28-26).

A-14,916 (17,625), T-2:40.

Senators 6, Ducks 2
Anaheim 0 1 1-2
Ottawa 2 2 2-6
First Period—1, Ottawa, Michalek 3 (E.Karlsson, Zibanejad), 2:03 (pp), 2, Ottawa, Stone 8 (Browacek, Turris), 8:21.
Second Period—3, Ottawa, Turris 7, 16:18 (sh), 4, Ottawa, Hoffman 9, 16:58.
Third Period—1, Ottawa, Lovjoy, 15:16.

Third Period—6, Anaheim, Getzlaf 12 (Lovjoy, Bryzgalov), 1:48, 7, Ottawa, Hoffman 10 (Ryan, E.Karlsson), 5:40-9, Ottawa, Zibanejad 9 (Ryan), 16:32.
Shots on Goal—Ottawa 12-10-12-34, Ottawa 7-12-12-31.

Power-play opportunities—Anaheim 0 of 3, Ottawa 1 of 4.
Goals—Anaheim, Bryzgalov 1-0-0 (31 shots-25 saves), Ottawa, Anderson 8-8-4 (34-32).

A-19,443 (19,153), T-2:28.

Islanders 2, Red Wings 1
N.Y. Islanders 1 1 0-2
Detroit 1 0 0-1
First Period—1, Detroit, Zetterberg 6 (Heim, Tatar), 8:49, 2, N.Y. Islanders, Nelson 14 (Visnovsky, Lee), 16:03.
Second Period—3, N.Y. Islanders, Lee 6 (Nelson), 10:41.

Third Period—None.
Shots on Goal—N.Y. Islanders 9-16-7-32, Detroit 6-7-5-18.
Power-play opportunities—N.Y. Islanders 0 of 3, Detroit 0 of 2.

Goals—N.Y. Islanders, Halak 17-6-0 (18 shots-17 saves), Detroit, Howard (3-8), Mrazek 3-2-0 (0:00 second, 23-22).

A-20,027 (20,027), T-2:21.

Jets 2, Bruins 1
Boston 0 1 0-1
Winnipeg 1 1 1-2
First Period—1, Winnipeg, E.Kane 6 (Crisone, Harrison), 3:12.
Second Period—2, Boston, Krug 6 (Kelly, Soderberg), 4:49, 3, Winnipeg, Perreault 5 (Bystrjanen, Schiefel), 19:37.
Shots on Goal—Boston 4-11-16-31, Winnipeg 16-7-4-27.

Power-play opportunities—Boston 0 of 3, Winnipeg 0 of 4.
Goals—Boston, Rask 12-10-3 (27 shots-25 saves), Winnipeg, Hutchinson 7-2-2 (31-30).

A-15,016 (15,004), T-2:22.

Scoring Leaders Through Dec. 19

Player	GP	G	A	Pts
Tyler Seguin, Dal	31	23	16	39
Evgeni Malkin, Pit	31	15	23	38
Jakob Voracek, Car	31	12	28	30
Vladimir Tarasenko, Stl	32	20	17	37
Ryan Getzlaf, TB	31	19	25	37
Steven Stamkos, Fla	34	19	17	36

LARRY MACDONALD, THE CANADIAN PRESS/AP

Dallas' Trevor Daley, right, scores against Calgary goalie Jonas Hiller during the second period of Friday's game in Calgary, Alberta.



COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Colonels stun No. 18 Hurricanes

Walden leads E. Kentucky in rout of Miami

By Santos Perez
The Associated Press

CORAL GABLES, Fla. — Eastern Kentucky made a statement — at Miami's expense.

Corey Walden scored 18 points to help the Colonels of the Ohio Valley Conference rout the No. 18 Miami 72-44 on Friday night.

The Colonels (6-4) never trailed, led by two at halftime and pulled away with a 22-2 run early in the second half. Isaac McClone keyed the surge with three three-pointers and his third conversion from behind the arc gave Eastern Kentucky a 43-27 lead with 13:21 remaining.

Miami (9-2) was scoreless for an 8:27 stretch until Davon Reed made two free throws with 10:40 left to cut Eastern Kentucky's lead to 43-29.

"Our whole goal going into the game was there's no way we were going to allow Miami to get to 50," Eastern Kentucky coach Jeff Neubauer said. "You can have 49 points but they're not getting 50. Somehow that came true here tonight."

The Colonels ran off eight straight points on consecutive three-pointers from Timmy Knipp and Jaylen Babb-Harri-



JOEL AUERBACH/AP

Eastern Kentucky's Denzel Richardson boxes out Miami's Angel Rodriguez during the first half of Friday's game in Coral Gables, Fla. The Colonels routed the No. 18 Hurricanes 72-44.

son's layup for a 51-29 lead with 8:49 remaining.

Knipp scored 17 points and hit 5 of 9 three-pointers. Eric Stutz added 13, and McClone had 12.

"It's a dream come true," Knipp said. "You dream about playing in these types of games

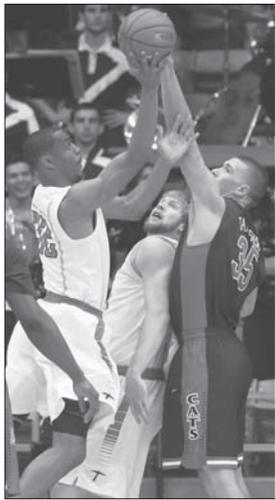
and escaping with a win. It's a huge boost for our team and our teammates."

Reed's three-pointer with 8:07 left ended a field goal drought of 10:33 for Miami. The Hurricanes shot 29 percent from the field.

Sheldon McClellan led the Hur-

ricanes with 14 points.

"It's one thing if you miss shots but we didn't share the ball very well," Miami coach Jim Larranaga said. "Because of that we didn't defend at all. We gave them everything they wanted — no matter what."



VICTOR CALZADARA/AP

UTEP's Vince Hunter, left, shoots over Arizona defender Kaleb Tarczewski, right, as Hunter's teammate attempts to screen Tarczewski during the first half of Friday's game in El Paso, Texas.

AP Top 25 roundup

No. 3 Arizona gets by UTEP

The Associated Press

EL PASO, Texas — Arizona freshman Stanley Johnson wanted to know how he'd play in his first true road game. The answer was pretty good.

Johnson scored 15 points to help No. 3 Arizona survive a scare and pull away late for a 60-55 victory against UTEP on Friday night. "It was fun. We got off to a great start. They're a very good team with a good player. It was a good game. I enjoyed it," Johnson said. "It was the first road test for me as a freshman and I was interested to see how I'd respond."

Gabe York scored 13 points and Brandon Ashley added 10 for the Wildcats (12-0), who played eight games at home and three on a neutral site at the Maui Invitational.

"When you go somewhere else, they're not gonna like you and they're gonna talk a lot of mess," he said of playing on an opponent's court.

"They had great fans here that kept them in the game," Johnson said of the sellout crowd of 12,000 at the Don Haskins Center. "Everybody wants to beat us. I was expecting a tough game."

Vince Hunter had 18 points and 12 rebounds before fouling out with more than eight minutes remaining to lead the Miners (6-4), who were hosting a top-three team for the first time in program history.

Arizona made six of its first seven shots, including a dunk by Johnson to take a 15-2 lead with 14:46 remaining in the first half. But the

game changed after Johnson missed a three-pointer the next time down the court and Ashley missed two free throws.

UTEP stepped up its defensive intensity to help fuel a 16-4 run that saw the Miners pull to a 21-all tie after a dunk by Cedrick Lang with 3:11 to go in the first half.

Arizona led 28-25 at halftime and the game remained tight in the second half, as the Miners led 40-38 with 12:41 to go on an inside bucket by Hunter.

"He took over for about a 10-minute stretch, when we didn't have an answer for him," Miller said of Hunter.

But it was all Wildcats after that. Arizona held UTEP without a basket for more than 5 minutes while it pushed its lead up to 48-41 with a 10-1 run.

"We made the plays when we needed to," Miller said. "We knew it was gonna be a hard-fought game here, especially with the crowd like that. Those are all things you grow from. This was a great test for us. Whether we won or lost, we feel like we're a better team."

No. 20 St. John's 53, Saint Mary's 47: D'Angelo Harrison scored 21 points and the Red Storm overcame a 15-point halftime deficit to rally past the visiting Gaels.

The Red Storm (9-1) trailed 33-18 at the break. St. John's opened the second half with a 27-8 run to take the lead. Sir'Dominic Pointer added 11 points and 11 rebounds for St. John's. Brad Waldow had 26 points and 11 rebounds for the Gaels (6-3).

Scoreboard

Friday's men's scores

- EAST**
American International 68, Chestnut Hill 67
- Bentley 88, Caldwell 70
Bucknell 88, Case Reserve 65
Buffalo 88, Niagara 62
Bartmouth 58, N. Illinois 55, OT
Princeton 77, Lipscomb 55
St. John's 53, Saint Mary's (Cal) 47
- SOUTH**
Alabama 69, Stillman 49
E. Kentucky 72, Miami 44
Florida Gulf Coast 83, Furman 78
Gardner-Webb 81, Illinois 55, OT
Hampton-Sydney 58, Sewanee 48
Hampton 66, Tennessee St. 54
Liberty 34, Cent. Pennsylvania 15
Louisiana-Monroe 76, LSU-Alexandria 71
Mercer 67, Bethune-Cookman 46
Middle Tennessee 68, Chattanooga 58
N. Kentucky 83, Morehead St. 60
Norfolk St. 81, N. Arizona 62
North Florida 83, Florida A&M 65
Old Dominion 60, Md.-Eastern Shore 43
Radford 76, Siena 66
SE Louisiana 81, Winthrop 71
South Carolina 68, Clemson 45
St. Leo 73, Limestone 63
Tennessee 61, Tennessee Tech 58
Trevecca Nazarene 65, Kentucky St. 64
Tulane 56, Jackson St. 49
William & Mary 86, Washington (Md.) 46
- MIDWEST**
Cent. Michigan 97, Concordia (Mich.) 60
Cregg 75, Texas-Pan American 60
Kalamazoo 63, Wis.-River Falls 60
Kent St. 71, NC A&T 57
Loyal of Chicago 73, S. Utah 57
Marquette 83, Alabama A&M 49
Minn.-Crookston 73, Bemidji St. 64
Minnesota 92, Seattle 67
Minot St. 93, Mary 88
New Orleans 56, Illinois 52
North Central (Minn.) 75, Hamline 74
North Dakota 76, Dickinson St. 48
Omn 88, Calvin 80
Wis.-Oshkosh 62, Alma 56
Wis.-Whitewater 74, Missouri (Ill.) 54
Youngstown St. 92, Wilberforce 71
- SOUTHWEST**
Lamar 80, Milligan 53
LeTourneau 75, U. of the Ozarks 62
Texas A&M Commerce 91, Henderson St. 61
- Texas Tech 72, Ark.-Pine Bluff 51
Wayland Baptist 97, Dallas Christian 69
- WEST**
Arizona 60, UTEP 55
California 75, E. Washington 67
Colorado St. 85, Denver 34
S. Dakota St. 53, CS Bakersfield 49
C. Santa Barbara 60, San Diego Christian 46
Utah St. 69, Idaho St. 56

Friday's women's scores

- EAST**
Bucknell 73, Yale 65
Caldwell 87, Nyack 54
Case Reserve 58, Drexel 40
Princeton 104, Portland St. 33
St. John's 81, N. Illinois 55
Siena 62, Binghamton 53
Stony Brook 50, Lafayette 58
UCorn 98, DePaul 64
- SOUTH**
Barry 62, Fayetteville St. 56
Baylor 74, Syracuse 72
Belmont 85, Mercer 83
Clemson 72, Longwood 56
Duke 95, Middle Tennessee 46
Florida St. 97, Savannah St. 51
Georgia St. 71, UMass 66
Jacksonville St. 70, Charleston Southern 43
- Kentucky Wesleyan 87, Cincinnati Christian 66
Louisiana-Lafayette 64, Alcorn St. 57, OT
Memphis 62, MVU 39
NC State 82, Davidson 56
North Carolina 65, Maine 36
Ohio 74, La Salle 63
Ole Miss 71, Illinois 55
Stetson 76, Campbell 63
Texas St. 60, Bethune-Cookman 40
Thomas More 62, Cumberland 57
Tennessee 62, UConn 62
Transylvania 96, Blackburn 58
UNC Asheville 61
UAB 65, Ark.-Pine Bluff 56
UCA 71, Samford 67
William & Mary 61, ETSU 48
- MIDWEST**
Arkansas St. 78, Missouri St. 62
E. Kentucky 66, Illinois 55, OT
Bowling Green 58, Illinois St. 64
E. Michigan 66, Ohio 74
Mary 86, Minot St. 57
Michigan 79, Canisius 43
N. Kentucky 83, Delaware 58
Purdue 69, UC Irvine 44
St. Francis (Ind.) 62, Wartburg 50
Wichita St. 57, Louisiana-Monroe 42
Wright St. 72, Denver 53
Youngstown St. 84, Ohio Valley 33
- SOUTHWEST**
Houston 56, UTSA 59
Rice 57, McNeese St. 55, OT
Texas 76, Nicholls St. 49
U. of the Ozarks 75, LeTourneau 63
- FAR WEST**
Albany (N.Y.) 62, Pepperdine 36
Boston College 86, Santa Clara St. 79
Fresno St. 83, Bethesda 61
Lafayette 78, Santa Barbara 45
Pacific 87, New Mexico 62
- TOURNAMENTS**
Bancorp South Holiday Classic
First Round
Cetna 62, Rust 60
Rhodes 58, Augustana (Ill.) 51
Lehigh Classic
First Round
Austyn Peay 88, Saint Louis 81
Montana 81, Utah Valley 84
Wayne Classic
First Round
Northwood (Mich.) 69, Bellarmine 53
Wayne (Mich.) 96, Salem International 43

COLLEGE FOOTBALL



DON PETERSEN/AP

Wisconsin-Whitewater receiver Dennis Moore (31) scampers for a 75 yard touchdown after making a catch against Mount Union's Jared Ruth (80) during the second half of the NCAA Division III championship game Friday in Salem, Va. Whitewater won 43-34.

Interim coaches caught in limbo

By ERIC OLSON
The Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — Barney Cotton choked up as he described the challenges that come with serving as Nebraska's interim head coach.

He wants to accomplish the seemingly impossible task of maintaining a business-as-usual atmosphere in the wake of Bo Pelini's firing. He vows to make sure the players have the best experience possible at the Holiday Bowl.

Yet, he still feels the punch in the gut from Pelini's firing and sadness for assistant coaches who don't know what the future holds after new coach Mike Riley takes full control following the Dec. 27 game against Southern California.

"Little by little, guys are being given notices that this spot will be filled by someone else and that spot will be filled by someone else," Cotton said. "Those are the hardest things. You're talking wives and kids and moving and new schools and all that. That really tugs at you. I wish I could make it all go away, but obviously that's not the reality we live in."

Cotton is among five interim coaches who will be in charge of teams this bowl season. The others are Dave Baldwin at Colorado State, David Gibbs at Houston, Joe Rudolph at Pittsburgh and D.J. Durkin at Florida.

Cotton already has landed his next job as offensive coordinator at UNLV. Baldwin is a candidate to replace Jim McElwain as the Rams' head coach. Gibbs hopes to stay on as defensive coordinator for Tom Herman. Rudolph might join the staff of former Pitt coach Paul Chryst at Wisconsin. Durkin has been connected to several defensive coordinator jobs since finding out this week he wouldn't be retained by McElwain, Florida's new coach.

The interim jobs might be more challenging for Baldwin and Rudolph, whose bosses were not fired but instead left for better jobs.

"It's a process that goes through the mind right now," Baldwin said. "You're 10-2, yet you're not sure if you'll be employed at all next year. There's limbo, but we accept that in this profession. If you're worried about it, you shouldn't have gotten into this profession."

The 58-year-old Cotton grew up in Omaha, played offensive line for the Cornhuskers and served as a graduate assistant under Tom Osborne. He was Frank Solich's offensive coordinator in 2003 and held several jobs on Pelini's staff since 2008. He has had three sons play for Nebraska.

"I wouldn't have traded my playing experience, certainly wouldn't have traded working for Frank and working for Bo and having Coach Osborne as the (athletic director) here," Cotton said. "And having the chance for Bo and Coach Osborne to give my boys the opportunity to come play at Nebraska, where their dad played and where my folks have lived... I'll always be thankful and always be blessed."

AP Sports Writer Mark Long in Gainesville, Florida, contributed to this report.

Roundup

Warhawks claim D-III title

NAIA crown goes to Southern Oregon

The Associated Press

SALEM, Va. — Matt Behrendt was the overshadowed quarterback again. Until they played the game.

The Wisconsin-Whitewater senior threw for 365 yards and four touchdowns and the Warhawks continued their mastery of Mount Union in the NCAA Division III championship game with a 43-34 victory Friday night.

The Warhawks (15-0) extended their winning streak to 32 games, the longest in the nation, and beat the Purple Raiders for the sixth time in the last seven meetings — all in the Amos Alonzo Stagg Bowl.

Behrendt finished 26-for-38 with two interceptions and was named the most outstanding player for the second year in a row, both times after outplaying Kevin Burke, the Purple Raiders' two-time Gagliardi Trophy-winning quarterback.

"I love it," Behrendt said about getting championships over player of the year awards. "Especially for the team to have these two national championships. You can't ever take them away. There's nothing more important than that."

Behrendt had plenty of help. Jake Kumerow caught eight passes for 130 yards and a score, Jordan Ratliffe ran for 116 yards on 24 carries and Dennis Moore ran for 74 yards and caught two passes for 108 and a critical touchdown.

Mount Union (14-1), the winner of 11 national titles, was appearing in the game for the 10th consecutive season, and arrived

having admittedly changed some things up on defense after a 52-14 loss to the Warhawks last year in the title game.

On the field, however, Whitewater trailed for only one play all night, at 31-30 in the third quarter.

On the first play after falling behind, Behrendt hit Moore with a screen pass, and Moore found his blockers, cut back across the field and took it 75 yards for a touchdown, restoring the Warhawks' lead to 37-31.

NAIA

Southern Oregon 55, Marian College 31: Austin Dodge led the Knights to their first NAIA football championship, throwing for 429 yards and three touchdowns in a victory over the turnover-prone Raiders at Daytona Beach, Fla.

Dodge, the NAIA Player of the Year, was 21-for-39 for the Raiders (13-2). Melvin Mason, Dylan Young and Ryan Retzlaff caught touchdown passes and Mason also ran for 56 yards and three scores.

"We fulfilled a dream because the players bought in," Southern Oregon coach Craig Howard said. "These guys have done everything we asked and I promised these guys they would leave Southern Oregon with a degree and a national championship."

Hayden Northern threw for a school-record 495 yards for Marian (11-3), but had six interceptions. The Indiana school also lost two fumbles.

Anthony Jones Jr. had 17 catches for 234



JOHN RAOUX/AP

Southern Oregon running back Melvin Mason, right, celebrates a touchdown run with teammate Karrington Jones during the first half of an NAIA championship game Friday in Daytona Beach, Fla.

yards and three touchdowns. Ryan Retzlaff had five catches for 117 yards, and Matt Retzlaff had five receptions for 107 yards for Southern Oregon.

NFL

Rookie: Bucs' Evans among top WRs in NFL

FROM BACK PAGE

But arguably no offensive rookie has meant more to his team than Evans, who's already tied Tampa Bay's single-season record for touchdown receptions with 11. That's tied for fourth in the NFL — most by a rookie — and an astounding 44 percent of the Bucs' offensive TDs.

"That's kind of crazy," the 6-foot-5, 231-pound Evans says. "I'm expected to do well. ... I'm humble, but I'm confident in my game," the 21-year-old receiver said. "If I wasn't confident, I would have stayed in college. I came out. I thought I had the physicality to be successful. I've made the transition the way I thought I would."

If there was a knock on Evans entering the NFL after spending the last two seasons as Johnny Manziel's favorite target at Texas A&M, it was he lacked the speed to be a consistent deep threat. That hasn't been the case despite playing much of the season with struggling quarterback Josh McCown, the NFC's lowest-rated passer.

Evans has 13 receptions of 25-plus yards — five more than both Beckham and Watkins, and six more than Benjamin and Jacksonville's Allen Hurns. He has four catches over 40 yards, matching Beckham, Hurns and Pittsburgh's Martavis Bryant, including a 56-yarder for a TD during a seven-catch, 209-yard performance against Washington.

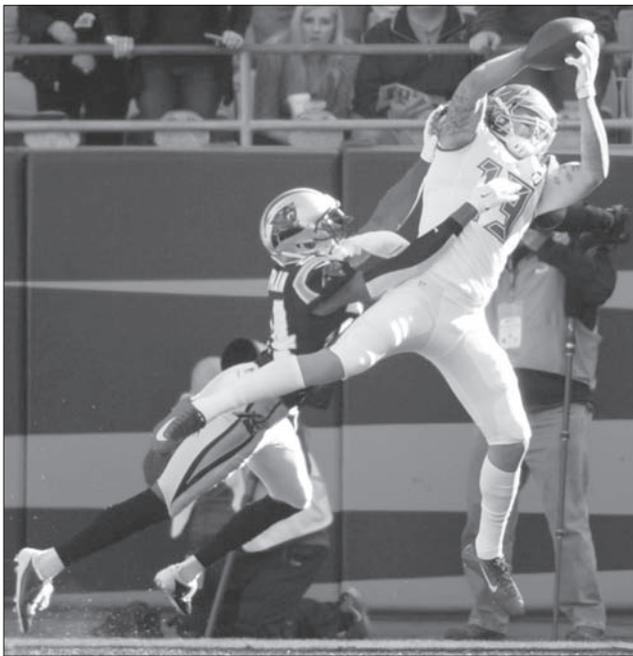
Beckham torched the Redskins with 12 receptions for 143 yards and three TDs last week, taking the lead among rookies with 972 yards receiving. Evans is third with 948, four behind Benjamin.

With Watkins standing at 850 with two games remaining in the regular season, four rookies are within striking distance of 1,000 for the year. If at least three get there, it would be a league first. The only year more than one rookie receiver finished with 1,000-plus yards was 1986: Bill Brooks had 1,131 for the Colts and Ernest Givins finished with 1,062 for the Oilers.

Beckham and LSU college teammate Jarvis Landry, drafted in the second round by the Dolphins, lead all rookies with 71 receptions. They're followed by Benjamin (67), Evans (59), Watkins (59) and Philadelphia's Jordan Matthews (56). With nine touchdowns, Beckham and Benjamin trail Evans, who has nine in his seven games plus following a relatively quiet start.

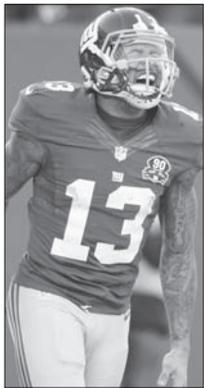
Green Bay's Jordy Nelson, who's having a career season, said it's difficult to not notice Evans' emergence.

"I haven't been able to watch him too much, but I've seen some of his highlights on TV. He's obviously a big guy that can make plays. He's got a huge catch ra-



PHOTOS BY MIKE McCOWN, ABOVE, AND BILL MOSTROUIN, BELOW/AP

A large chunk of fantasy footballers headed to the championship this weekend can thank Tampa Bay rookie wide receiver Mike Evans (13), above, who has accounted for an astounding 44 percent of the Buccaneers' offensive touchdowns, and New York Giants receiver Odell Beckham Jr., below, who's so many teams in the fantasy final than any other NFL player.



dius, and what he can do after the catch as well," the Packers receiver said, noting you have to be impressed with any rookie with a shot at topping 1,000 yards.

"I think every rookie receiver, especially drafted early, they'll have their splash games and you'll see the talent and the ability that's there," Nelson said. "But to grasp an offense and get that chemistry down with a quarterback and sustain it in a season ... it's impressive. You can tell that he's put a lot into

'I'm humble, but I'm confident in my game. If I wasn't confident, I would have stayed in college.'

Mike Evans

Tampa Bay Buccaneers rookie wide receiver

it and he's got a bright future."

Watkins was the first of five receivers drafted in the first round, No. 4 overall, three spots before Evans. Beckham was taken 12th and has blossomed after missing the first four games because of injury. New Orleans' Brandin Cook (No. 20) had 53 catches before being lost for the year with a thumb injury, and Benjamin (No. 28) has given Carolina a boost during an otherwise tough season for the Panthers offensively.

"It's been huge with all the roster turnover in the offseason at that position to have Kelvin cine in as our top pick and hit the ground running from the first game and keep that consistency," Carolina tight end Greg Olsen said.

"He brings a ton to the table physically, but his mental approach for a young kid has been tremendous. He studies, he wants to do well, he wants to do everything right. There's a reason he's had success on the field. He works that way, he continues to want to improve. ... The sky is the limit. He's just going to continue to get better."

McCown said Evans undoubtedly has benefited from playing opposite receiver Vincent Jackson, who's closing in on his third straight 1,000-yard season with the Bucs, sixth overall.

Jackson leads the Bucs with 66 receptions, but has only two TDs — none in the past 10 games.

"He's a big part of my success. He's one of the best receivers in the league," Evans said. "... Whatever he has to say, I listen."

As good as Evans has been catching the football, the most memorable play of his rookie year may be — of all things — a block. Much like video of Beckham's much-talked-about circus catch, Evans blocking and eventually knocking Cincinnati's Terrence Newman to the ground against the Bengals is must-see viewing.

"It was kind of weird. ... I guess he was upset. I had pushed him right before that and I guess he wanted to (retaliate) and he launched at me," Evans said. "It was awkward. He kind of ended up in the air, and I just slammed him. ... It didn't seem like much at the time. Much better on tape."

New video of Rice, fiancée released

The Associated Press

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. — A video released Friday shows Ray Rice's then-fiancée crying and kissing him while they are both handcuffed and being taken to jail by police officers after Rice punched her in a casino elevator.

The video was obtained by ABC News through a public records request filed with the New Jersey Gaming Enforcement Division. Rice's attorney fought to keep the video from being released but lost.



Rice

The video shows Janay Palmer — now married to the former Baltimore Ravens running back — crying and being comforted by officers or security officials at the Revel casino early on the morning of Feb. 15.

An officer walked a handcuffed Rice toward an elevator, pulling Rice's sweatshirt hood over his head. Palmer, also handcuffed, appeared to be crying as another officer led her behind Rice.

Both of them were placed in an elevator with several officers. Rice and Palmer moved their heads together as if they were talking. Palmer leaned in and appeared to kiss Rice before they are escorted out of the elevator.

ABC said the total length of the video is about 45 minutes long. The network released excerpts that last about 2½ minutes.

TMZ first published video of the punch. In September, a law enforcement official showed the Associated Press multiple videos from the casino the night Rice was arrested. Those videos included security cameras from inside and outside the elevator and two cell phone videos that released some audio to staff members and others tried to assist Palmer. None of the videos shown to the AP included the newly released footage obtained by ABC. The videos were shown to the AP on condition of anonymity because the official wasn't authorized to release them.

Rice was charged with assault and entered an intervention program to have the charges dropped. Charges against Palmer were dropped for a lack of evidence.

NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell initially suspended Rice for two games. After the video of the punch became public, Goodell changed the suspension to indefinite and the Ravens released Rice.

An arbitrator later ruled in favor of Rice and threw out the indefinite suspension, freeing Rice to play again. No team has signed Rice for two games, but a team will take him on for next season.



GAMEDAY

WEEK 16

TELEVISED GAMES



Baltimore Ravens (9-5) at Houston Texans (7-7)

AFN-Xtra

7 p.m. Sunday CET

Series: Ravens lead 6-1.

Last meeting: Baltimore beat visiting Houston 30-9 on Sept. 22, 2012.

Notes: Ravens QB Joe Flacco passed for 221 yards last week and became the first in club history to reach 25,000 (25,024). ... Texans DE J.J. Watt is the first player with 3 offensive TDs (3 receiving) and 2 TDs on takeaways (INT, fumble recovery) in a season since Bill Goldery in 1948.



Kansas City Chiefs (8-6) at Pittsburgh Steelers (9-5)

AFN-Sports

7 p.m. Sunday CET

Series: Steelers lead 19-9.

Last meeting: Pittsburgh defeated visiting Kansas City 16-13 on Oct. 12, 2012.

Notes: In the past 12 games, Chiefs QB Alex Smith has 2,497 passing yards and 17 TDs against only 3 INTs for a 100.7 rating. ... Steelers RB Le'Veon Bell leads the AFC and is second in the NFL with 2,043 yards from scrimmage (1,278 rushing, 765 receiving), a single-season Steelers record.

Marquee matchup

Seattle Seahawks (10-4) at Arizona Cardinals (11-3)

AFN-Sports, 2:20 a.m. Monday Central European Time

SERIES RECORD: Cardinals lead 16-15; Seahawks have won three of the past four.

LAST MEETING: Seahawks beat Cardinals 19-3 on Nov. 23 at Seattle.

SEAHAWKS OFFENSE: OVERALL (11), RUSH (1), PASS (3).

SEAHAWKS DEFENSE: OVERALL (1), RUSH (5), PASS (1).

CARDINALS OFFENSE: OVERALL (24), RUSH (28), PASS (15).

CARDINALS DEFENSE: OVERALL (14), RUSH (6), PASS (29).

STREAKS, STATS AND NOTES: The Seahawks have won seven of their past eight. ... QB Russell Wilson has 34 wins, the most by an NFL QB in his first three seasons. In his last game at Arizona, he passed for 3 TDs and a 122.1 rating. ... RB Marshawn Lynch has 19 TDs (15 rushing, 4 receiving) in his last 18 games, including playoffs. He has 1,000-plus rushing yards and 10-plus rushing TDs for the fourth

consecutive season. ... WR Doug Baldwin leads the team with a career-high 56 catches. WR Jermaine Kearse has set career highs in catches (37) and yards (529). ... CB Richard Sherman has 6 INTs (1 TD) in his past six games against Arizona. Since entering the NFL in 2011, he leads the league with 23 INTs. DT Jordan Hill has 4 sacks in the past four games. ... The Cardinals have clinched a playoff berth, and their 11 victories are tied for the most in franchise history. They are 7-0 at home, their most home wins since 1925. ... QB Ryan Lindley, filling in for injured Drew Stanton (who was filling in for injured Carson Palmer), has four career starts. ... WR Larry Fitzgerald has a catch in 161 consecutive games, the longest active streak in the NFL. Since entering the league in 2004, he leads the NFL with 98 receiving TDs (including playoffs). ... DE Calais Campbell has 11½ sacks in his past 17 home games. Since 2011, CB Patrick Peterson is the only player in the NFL with 15-plus INTs (15) and 5 return TDs (5).

Seattle's Russell Wilson is the most victories by a quarterback in his first three seasons.

ELAINE THOMPSON/AP



Game capsules compiled from nflmedia.com



Buffalo Bills (8-6) at Oakland Raiders (2-12)

AFN-Xtra

10:25 p.m. Sunday CET

Series: Raiders lead 19-17.

Last meeting: Buffalo beat visiting Oakland 38-35 on Sept. 18, 2011.

Notes: The Bills lead the NFL with 49 sacks and are the only team to have three players with 9-plus sacks (DE Mario Williams, 13; DT Marcel Darius, 10; and LB Jerry Hughes, 9½). ... Raiders QB Derek Carr (Round 2, No. 36 overall) leads NFL rookies in passing yards (2,898) and TDs (18), both club rookie records.



Indianapolis Colts (10-4) at Dallas Cowboys (10-4)

AFN-Sports

10:25 p.m. Sunday CET

Series: Cowboys lead 9-5.

Last meeting: Dallas beat host Indianapolis 38-25 on Dec. 5, 2010.

Notes: Since entering the NFL in 2012, Colts QB Andrew Luck has 12,688 passing yards, the most of any Super Bowl-era QB in his first three seasons. ... Cowboys QB Tony Romo has a 117.8 rating in the past 11 games (26 TDs, 5 INTs). He's aiming for his fifth straight win against the AFC. ... WR Dez Bryant leads the NFL with 13 receiving TDs.

Also on AFN: Detroit Lions (10-4) at Chicago Bears (5-9), AFN-Atlantic, 7 p.m. Sunday CET. New York Giants (5-9) at St. Louis Rams (6-8), AFN-Atlantic, 10 p.m. Sunday CET.

EXPANDED STANDINGS

American Conference

	East									
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	Home	Away	AFC	Div
y-New England	11	3	0	.786	442	280	7-0-0	4-3-0	8-2-0	3-1-0
Buffalo	8	6	0	.571	302	254	5-3-0	3-3-0	4-6-0	4-0-0
Miami	7	7	0	.500	327	301	3-3-0	4-4-0	6-5-0	1-2-0
N.Y. Jets	3	11	0	.214	230	360	2-5-0	1-6-0	3-7-0	0-4-0
South										
y-Indianapolis	10	4	0	.714	424	317	6-2-0	4-2-0	8-3-0	2-1-0
Houston	7	7	0	.500	324	277	3-3-0	4-4-0	6-4-0	1-3-0
Jacksonville	3	12	0	.200	232	389	1-5-0	0-7-0	2-9-0	1-3-0
Tennessee	2	13	0	.133	244	411	1-6-0	1-7-0	2-9-0	0-4-0
North										
Cincinnati	9	4	1	.679	311	289	4-2-1	5-2-0	6-4-0	3-0-1
Pittsburgh	9	5	0	.643	389	339	4-2-0	5-3-0	7-3-0	2-2-0
Baltimore	9	5	0	.643	376	267	5-2-0	4-3-0	5-5-0	4-0-0
Cleveland	7	7	0	.500	276	300	4-4-0	3-3-0	4-7-0	3-0-0
West										
y-Denver	11	3	0	.786	407	303	7-0-0	4-3-0	9-1-0	2-2-0
Kansas City	8	6	0	.571	322	254	5-2-0	3-4-0	6-4-0	2-2-0
San Diego	8	6	0	.571	303	294	5-3-0	3-3-0	6-5-0	2-1-0
Oakland	2	12	0	.143	213	381	2-5-0	0-7-0	1-9-0	1-3-0

National Conference

	East									
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA	Home	Away	NFC	AFC
Dallas	10	4	0	.714	381	328	3-4-0	7-0-0	7-4-0	3-0-0
Philadelphia	9	5	0	.643	416	347	6-2-0	3-3-0	5-5-0	4-0-0
N.Y. Giants	5	9	0	.357	317	339	3-4-0	2-5-0	3-7-0	2-2-0
Washington	3	11	0	.214	257	370	2-4-0	1-7-0	1-9-0	2-2-0
North										
New Orleans	6	8	0	.429	364	374	3-4-0	3-4-0	5-5-0	1-3-0
Carolina	5	8	1	.393	288	358	3-4-0	2-4-1	5-6-0	0-2-1
Atlanta	5	9	0	.357	348	369	3-4-0	2-5-0	5-5-0	4-0-0
Tampa Bay	2	12	0	.143	254	367	0-6-0	2-6-0	1-9-0	1-3-0
South										
Detroit	10	4	0	.714	281	238	7-1-0	3-3-0	8-2-0	2-2-0
Green Bay	10	4	0	.714	436	325	7-0-0	3-4-0	7-3-0	1-1-0
Minnesota	6	8	0	.429	277	297	4-3-0	2-5-0	5-6-0	1-2-0
Chicago	5	9	0	.357	296	409	2-5-0	3-4-0	4-6-0	1-3-0
West										
Arizona	11	3	0	.786	287	244	7-0-0	4-3-0	8-2-0	3-1-0
Seattle	10	4	0	.714	339	242	6-1-0	4-3-0	8-2-0	2-2-0
San Francisco	7	7	0	.500	251	285	3-3-0	4-4-0	6-5-0	1-2-0
St. Louis	6	8	0	.429	291	297	3-4-0	3-4-0	4-6-0	2-2-0

REST OF THE SCHEDULE

Atlanta at New Orleans
Minnesota at Miami
Cleveland at Carolina
Green Bay at Tampa Bay
New England at N.Y. Jets
Denver at Cincinnati

NEXT WEEK

Sunday, Dec. 28

Indianapolis at Tennessee
Detroit at Green Bay
Jacksonville at Houston
San Diego at Kansas City
Chicago at Minnesota
Dallas at Atlanta
Cleveland at Baltimore
Carolina at Washington
N.Y. Jets at Miami
Buffalo at New England
Philadelphia at N.Y. Giants
Cincinnati at Pittsburgh
New Orleans at Tampa Bay
Arizona at San Francisco
St. Louis at Seattle
Oakland at Denver

SPORTS



Garbage man

Lee's second-period goal lifts Islanders over Red Wings | Page 26

NFL

No catching up

Rookie wide receivers rewarding teams with immediate results

BY FRED GOODALL
The Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — Tampa Bay's Mike Evans resists labels that describe him as a football player, especially those that short-change what he's accomplished as part of an outstanding class of rookie receivers lighting up the NFL.

The seventh overall pick in last spring's draft has been much more than a bright spot in an otherwise dismal season for the Buccaneers (2-12), who have the NFC's worst record and could wind up with the No. 1 draft pick in 2015.

Odell Beckham Jr.'s acrobatic, one-handed reception during a breakout performance for the New York Giants in prime time is being

trumpeted as the greatest catch of the season. Sammy Watkins has helped the Buffalo Bills move to the brink of their first winning season in a decade. Kelvin Benjamin has compiled an impressive résumé with the Carolina Panthers.

SEE ROOKIE ON PAGE 30

In this Oct. 26 file photo, Carolina Panthers wide receiver Kelvin Benjamin, right, makes a catch against Seattle Seahawks cornerback Richard Sherman, left, and Earl Thomas (obscured). Benjamin has compiled an impressive résumé in his rookie season with the Panthers.

CHUCK BURTON/AP

No. 18 Miami knocked off by Eastern Kentucky | College basketball, Page 28